

The SMART SET

*Edited by
George Jean Nathan
and
H.L. Mencken.*



MARCH, 1922

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11. Good Housekeeping	28	..
12. Smart Set	25	40
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17. McCall's	19	37
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The Old Roots of Love

By Bernice Lesbia Kenyon

FROM the old roots of love
Hidden in mold away,
Again there pushes forth
A tall and budded spray;

Soon to come to bloom
In flowers long denied,
Soon to shine by the road
With petals opened wide,

Soon to sway and shine
For every passing bee . . .
Quickly break the stalk,
Lest anyone should see!

Tramp the green thing down
Before it comes to flower!
Tread it deep in the grass!
It shall not have its hour!

From the old roots of love,
Hidden in mold away,
Again there pushes forth
A tall and budded spray . . .

The SMART SET

The
Aristocrat
Among
Magazines



Wall Street

By Hill Street

I

The Street, between Broad and Pearl

Faces. Streams of faces lighted by the cold sun that pours into the canon from above East River. Faces of young girls, painted, Jewish, hideous. Faces of boys, sleepy, adolescent, mystified, as if awakened too early from deep dreams. Fresh, smiling, bronzed faces. Thin, blue-lipped faces with cigarettes. Middle-aged and sagging faces. Clean and dirty faces. Broken faces that are now brazen. Confident and unbroken faces. Leering faces with swinish jowls. Eager faces of untouched youth. Young faces eager with youth's mockery. Faces furrowed with the mockery of age. Midas faces. Faces of pink-checked gallants beneath fawn-colored bowlers.

Radiant faces of widowed mothers earning bread for children. Faces of law clerks and lawyers. Heavy, debonaire, light, dark, round, square, smooth, rough faces. Faces of fat

Jews in closed motors. Faces of insolent chauffeurs. Rat-like faces of news vendors. Dark, Spanish faces. English, Scottish, Irish, German, Slavic, Italian faces. Every manner of Jewish face.

A torrent of faces flowing, as only an unnatural stream may, in all directions at once. A torrent of faces maintaining, as only an unnatural stream may, many different levels. Thin, sallow faces bobbing along above round, ruddy faces. Small, grimy faces scurrying at the bottom of the torrent. A torrent in which each particle, as may be true only of an unnatural stream, keeps its identity. Faces; faces; faces. Stamped on each its own problems of love, hate, sex, money, race, creed, existence.

Seeing all this torrent of faces, great, gaunt, black, medieval Trinity stands an eternal spectator in a little space that has been cleared for its feet. The pale sun has struck through the mists to light a dim fire on the gilt hands of

Trinity's clock. Chimes, ringing down the years from an age ascetic, cloistered, pour a mellowed, molten music over the torrent of faces. A benediction. . . . Jesus among the money changers.

II

Near Broad Street

A man with a dark, unsmiling face is moving from window to window in a large, high-ceiled apartment. As he pulls a heavy, blue rope the drapes at the window part silently in the centre and swing smoothly to the sides, where they hang in heavy, stately folds. The man moves about his task with a certain air—ritualistic, inconceivably quiet, calm. He wears a shiny, black coat, which accentuates oddly his slight stoop, his perfectly conceived self-effacement, and the fact that he is slightly bald.

The morning sun filters mistily into the great office as the windows are bared. The man leaves the last window and steps noiselessly across the deep, blue carpet to the great Adam table in its centre, where he picks up a dull, silver carafe and shakes it. Satisfied that it is empty, he removes the stopper and glides away to a door next to the cavernous, hooded fireplace at the end of the room. The door closes behind him. . . . There is no sound in the room for several minutes. The light seems to change slightly, ever so slightly, as it streams in from the four majestic windows, now cold and dim, and now a bit warmer, as the morning mists waver thick and thin over the city.

The man returns, silently replacing the carafe on the table, moving it a shade farther from the telephone and reinserting the stopper. He goes back to the door by which he has just entered, and, opening it, reaches into a little hall, where he pushes one, then another and another and another button of a switch concealed there. An old painting of a sea-worn frigate looms into view above the fireplace at

the first touch. Next, two portraits on the soft, blue walls opposite the four, diamond-paned windows are lighted mellowly, and on the narrow wall at the end of the room, away from the fireplace, there comes into view the familiar, easy grace of Gainsborough's Blue Boy.

A door on the other side of the fireplace opens silently, framing a large, white-faced, sleek, young man. The first occupant of the room goes to him immediately and the two hold brief consultation over the large man's watch. In a few seconds they take up positions near the great, panelled, black door between the two softly lighted portraits. In a few seconds more that door opens slightly. The clear music of the old clock striking the hours comes into the deep silence of the room, and low, sinister, like the murmur from many throats, an undertone—the voice of the city—steals in.

A man steps into the room. The door closes. His servant and secretary bow deeply. . . . The diffused reflections of the amber windows brighten and darken on the deep blue of the rug.

III

Near Pearl Street

Two flights up, down a filthy hall, third door to the right around the corner. Marx's. A cubicle twelve feet by ten lined with coats in all stages of construction. Coats sans sleeves with great, white stitches running through them; coats with slippery, hair-cloth lapels pinned to their fronts; finished coats; coats on chairs; coats on the floor. Suspended from the centre of the ceiling a great, singing, glaring gas jet. On a soiled pressing board a glowing gas iron. In the exact centre of the room, Marx, in gray woolen underwear and trousers, perspiration standing in beads on his old forehead and running down his face into his gray beard. Marx.

If you have ripped your coat he will fix it for a dime.

Birds of Passage

[A Complete Novelette]

By Richmond Brooks Barrett

CHAPTER I

MONSIEUR MIRBEAU and his fat wife always felt, at horse show time, that their quaint ramshackle Inn was the most cosmopolitan and fashionable of hostleries. Each season the rates at the Mirbeau House were lowered and the guests grew correspondingly shoddier; throughout July and August, Henri and his Adelaide would survey their respectable band of governesses and tutors with condescending snobbery. What did it matter, after all? September and the horse show would be coming; then the rates would soar once more, then the Inn would recapture its pristine glory.

For years and years the professional riders had made the Mirbeau House their headquarters at Newport; like a flock of migratory birds, they settled noisily to roost on the eve of Labor Day and converted the quiet place into a perfect rookery of din and chatter. The Mirbeaus were naively flattered. Henri ransacked the wine-room, pattering up the rickety cellar-stairs with his arms full of bottles. Adelaide waddled about the kitchen, her vast bosom heaving with excitement, and made of the cooking an extravagant orgy. Fresh eggs by the dozen, quarts of the heaviest cream, mushrooms and truffles! What did Adelaide care? These people knew what they wanted; they put Madame on her mettle.

Now the Mirbeaus were sly French peasants and they weren't above cheating their more humdrum guests; but, with the arrival of the professional

riders, they forgot their shrewdness and became the genial hosts. Their adored birds of passage had been known to leave a scattering of bad checks behind them. The Mirbeaus didn't consider this irregularity a breach of faith. No indeed! They were willing to forget such offenses; for did not these few triumphant days, these days of pomp and show, project a warmth over the whole of the dreary, solitary winter? As Henri and Adelaide sat in the kitchen while a blizzard raged outside, their talk was always of September and the horse show.

It was a Sunday evening. The professional gang was foregathered at dinner. Eight o'clock and the function had just begun!

The very lateness of the hour tickled the Mirbeaus and gave them the sense of being a part of the moneyed world. Henri, beside the buffet, rubbed his lean hands together and eyed his waitresses with a darting keenness.

Ah—it was a pretty sight! The room was crowded. Weston, the well-known dealer, was already bickering loudly with his two sons over at the corner table and, leaning back in his chair, was relaying the quarrel to a sprightly woman nearby and soliciting her aid as referee. Lucille Edgar's shrill voice could be heard, penetratingly distinct; she was discussing nice points in horse-breeding that would have caused Henri a delighted blush, had he understood English better.

The conversation was loud and general; a topic spread in no time from group to group. The tables tonight

were not by any means an archipelago of stiff, exclusive little islands dotted about in the long room. The guests at this particular dinner resembled an over-grown family. The gay chatter floated out of the open windows; Henri hoped some of the noise would seep into the neighbors' houses.

Clouds of smoke drifted about the dining-room like gray cobwebs. Henri noticed with pride how many cigarettes had been laid down and forgotten, under the spell of Adelaide's hors d'œuvre. He sniffed contemptuously at the recollection of the finicky table-manners the governesses and other small fry of the summer had boasted.

Tonight was so different; these people enjoyed their food! They were engrossed in the taste of things, not in the handling of them. And they talked with their mouths full, too; no mumbling and whispering, as if they were afraid to call their souls their own. Of course it *was* a bit noisier than usual tonight. Henri, with his arms still aching from a fervent manipulation of the cocktail shaker, swelled with pride at the thought that his gin could have its effect even on such high-class people as these; and his eyes rested lovingly on the array of wine-glasses beside each plate.

A gala night for Henri and his Adelaide!

Suddenly Henri darted with all his Gallic agility to the door. A man and girl had just entered the room. They were both in riding-togs. The man, long and lank, had flung an arm carelessly over the girl's shoulders. She stood in front of him and returned the vociferous greeting of the diners with a flash of her white teeth and a military salute. She looked like an erect, soldierly little boy. It seemed incredible that, with her alert brightness, she should ever know fatigue or discouragement. Her companion, however, with his graceful stoop, his gentle brown eyes and furrowed forehead, had an air of chronic, humorous weariness about him. They were a handsome pair; they might have been a bold,

vivid jockey and a slightly discouraged, rather mystically befogged but sweet-tempered Russian student.

Henri, at their side, was thinking, "If only I could get a flashlight of my dining-room now. What an advertisement!"

Half a dozen people had pushed back their chairs and were surrounding the newcomers. The girl, tucking her crop under her arm, was shaking hands gaily; her voice had a bluff loudness and, when she laughed, she threw her slight shoulders back with a quaint, awkward jerk. The man was making bland jokes; his face, as he smiled, looked more than ever fagged.

Mirbeau ducked his head in excited deference, cleared the way of waitresses with his sharp elbows and, murmuring, "Ah—we were *afraid* you were dining out," he scurried off to a table by the window and crouched like an aged and hysterical monkey behind one of the chairs.

The girl smiled cordially up at Mirbeau as she sat down.

The tall man with her leaned over, patting the Frenchman on the back with easy amiability. Then he sank, with a loose-jointed flinging about of arms and legs, into his seat, settled his weight on the middle of his long spine and gave Mirbeau an affectionate smile.

"We've been riding all afternoon. We're thirsty, Henri — thirsty as the devil." He laughed with just the boisterous note to convey to Henri an invitation to join in; Henri did so with a will. "We *are* hungry, you know; but we're thirsty first."

Henri, with the chuckle still in his throat, made for the cocktail shaker.

"In one moment, Mr. Williams!" he cried.

Mr. Williams sighed, extended his legs to their full length, stretched as if there were a comfortable sort of soreness in his limbs, and indulged in a yawn with a slight suggestion of a shudder in it.

Then he smiled at the girl across from him.

"I *am* tired," he confessed. He pressed his lips together, while another yawn inflated his cheeks.

"Poor dear!" she sympathized, leaning forward impulsively to pat one of the man's nervous hands.

He shrugged his whole lank body.

"Oh, I'll be all right when I've had a few drinks," he vouchsafed.

He fumbled about in his pockets, brought out the box of cigarettes and tossed one casually into her lap. Then he took one himself and lit it. He wasn't being consciously rude; he hadn't the energy to help her—that was all.

The girl held out her hand and he dropped the matches into it.

"When's he coming?" he asked, his head rolling from side to side on the back of his chair and his eyes fixed on the ceiling. He blew the smoke out of his lungs in one straight jet.

She was sitting up rigidly in her chair. Epaulets would have gone well on her erect shoulders.

"Nine o'clock," she returned.

"Damned queer business, isn't it?" he murmured, shutting his eyes.

The girl laughed. "I suppose it is—as far as *he's* concerned."

Henri scuttled up at this moment with the cocktails.

"Thank God!" Williams commented.

The drinks galvanized him into a shambling activity again.

He hitched his chair up to the table, propped his chin on the backs of his hands and smiled into the girl's eyes.

"Tonight will fix things?" he asked.

She nodded her head with decision.

"It certainly ought to," she said.

"Well—here's good luck!" He poured out two glasses of wine from the bottle beside him. "Here's to a happy married life, Irene. You deserve it."

"Thanks, George."

Her bright blue eyes flashed at him; they were big, lovely eyes, childishly unrevealing. There was no inwardness in their light; they told nothing of herself, but they conveyed a naïve questioning. They took impressions but gave none. So now, though they

dilated, they remained bafflingly inexpressive. It was only by the quick drawing together of her shoulders and the sudden audacious tilt of her small head that her mingled excitement and exultation became manifest.

"You're a lucky little devil, you know," Williams told her.

She put down her wine-glass.

"Indeed I am!" she replied.

"No more Maison Mirbeau! No more helping me to bed nights!" he intoned dramatically. "You'll never have to unlace Dillon's shoes at two in the morning, my dear." He chuckled, but there was a half-wistful droop to his mouth under the bristly mustache.

They were silent for a moment. The girl let her gaze drift to the other tables.

"I wonder how many of them suspect," she murmured.

"I'd hate to say what most of them *probably* suspect," he returned.

His words delighted her.

"The Lord only knows what the gossip is," she admitted.

She crossed her legs, settled back in her chair with her cigarette and gave the other diners a brilliant, challenging smile. If she had thrown one of her riding-gauntlets into the midst of the company, her attitude of gay combativeness couldn't have been more nicely pointed. Catching the eyes of one of the Weston boys, she saluted him roguishly.

Williams, pouring his wine, had dropped into a reminiscent mood. "I say, Irene, will you ever forget *our* honeymoon?" His voice had a musing softness. "Of all the crazy picnics"

But if his thoughts were on the past, hers were on the future. She wasn't listening to him. She had got the attention of the dining-room focused on herself. Both the Weston boys were making for her table. Lucille Edgar was signalling with a wine-glass and shouting some shrill pleasantry. Irene's teeth flashed merrily. It was a delicious sensation, having a trump-card up one's sleeve, dallying with it and postponing mysteriously the actual playing of it.

She burst into a loud laugh from sheer exuberance of spirits.

Williams sighed.

"Damned if I don't feel homesick," he muttered. He got up wearily from his chair to shake hands. "Hello, Tom! Hello, Gregory!" he greeted the Weston boys.

Their answering salutations had a touch of ironic superiority. Evidently they realized that Irene had already thrown him into the discard. That the act might in future be solemnized, with all legal dignity, in the courts, they couldn't be expected to foresee.

Irene drew her shoulders together swiftly. The mistaken attitude of the Weston boys was the last touch necessary to prove her incredible good-fortune.

CHAPTER II

IRENE and George Williams had been married for three years; they had known at the start that the union was a temporary arrangement, to be dissolved at once if something better should come up. From the moment Thomas Dillon engaged them both to ride his horses, they had agreed to work together for the desired end. Dillon had made no secret of his infatuation. The whole horse-show world had soon become cognizant of the new complication and had set itself to watch developments.

Dillon, with his millions and his famous stables at Lenox, had been for years the swayer of destinies. His importance had had the unfortunate effect of causing others to value themselves lightly, where he was concerned. To capture his random attention—that was the goal. For Irene herself, a brief basking in the lime-light would have been flattering enough. Somehow, with Dillon, it was taken for granted that the circle of radiance shifted from one to another with great speed, like the relentlessly traveling spot-light in a musical comedy.

It was Williams, good-natured, easy-going Williams, who showed Irene her

mistake. Tom Dillon, for all his pompous possessions, was a simple sort of fellow; he might be piloted to the secure haven of matrimony if only a woman didn't stop off with him at some picturesque way-station.

"Women have always been fools with Dillon," Williams had humorously mumbled. "They forget that even millionaires do get married once in a while."

Events had justified his shrewd view of the situation. Irene, had she been forced to play a part, would doubtless have failed; the queer aspect of the business was that, by being perfectly honest, she got her millionaire ensnared. She didn't pretend to be in love with him; she treated him just as her nature prompted her.

Irene was a strange little thing; though she had spent her whole life among the promiscuities of horsemen and hadn't a glimmer of a moral sense, she retained a bright aloofness. She had no inclination for amorous encounters. So far as mental equipment went, she was as frankly coarse as the other women of her crowd; but her body had a cool insensitiveness that set her apart. Her appearance showed this passionless integrity. She seemed to be composed of some exquisite glazed china; it was hard to believe that her radiant flesh was nourished by so treacherous a fluid as blood. Just as her blue eyes showed no soul behind them, her skin appeared by no means a covering for mere human organs.

Irene was quite incapable of falling in love with a man. For Dillon, this baffling quality in her had been her greatest charm. He didn't care a rap what stories were abroad about her. He knew only that she was basically as clean as her vivid, poreless surface; he realized that she was being quite honest with him. She didn't simulate this coolness and indifference any more than a bold little boy would have. He loved her—that was enough, granted her nature. She would have had no interest for Dillon, if she had tried to force her way into his affections;

Williams had established things on just the right foundation when he had advised.

"Just be your funny little self, Irene. You don't care a damn about him or any other man; well—show him you don't."

On the night before the Newport show, Irene and Williams had known they were on the eve of the brilliant conclusion of their adventure. Irene, too shallow for any deep emotion, could still be as excitedly gleeful as a child.

When Dillon drove up to the Mirbeau House in his motor, she was sitting with her husband in a secluded part of the porch. Vines concealed them from the street.

"Nine o'clock!" she cried and, jumping up, gave Williams an ecstatic hug and kiss. "That must be Tom. Good-bye, dear!"

Dillon was standing beside his automobile. Irene hurried up to him with the slight swagger that was characteristic of her walk.

"Hello, Tom!" she greeted him. Her hand-shake was firm and friendly. "Sorry I had no time to get out of my habit—been riding all afternoon. Glamis acted like the very *devil*, too."

With Dillon, Irene shunned all topics that hadn't a direct bearing on his horses.

"I love you in your habit, Irene," Dillon returned, his admiration beaming from his eyes.

"That's very nice of you." Irene smiled and cocked her head at him in appreciation of his gallantry. She showed not the slightest embarrassment under his warm gaze.

"You'll need some kind of wrap," he told her solicitously. "It's chilly."

"No, indeed!" she cried. "I'm never cold."

She turned her trim back on him and sprang into her seat. Her gay independence could still astonish him; she had never flattered him into thinking she needed him.

Dillon, however, continued to be solicitous.

"Here, let me tuck you into this thing

a bit," he remarked, taking a heavy rug out of the back of the motor.

"Oh, very well!" Irene casually let him have his way.

While he was wrapping her up in the robe, she straightened her cravat with business-like absorption.

"Now then—isn't that snugger?" he asked, his face close to hers.

"Thanks—that will do nicely," she replied.

They were soon out of the town. On one side they had the sheen of the ocean, with great rocks standing out black against the spectral shimmer of the water; on the other side, still ponds caught the moon's rays and the reeds, in the path of light, resembled the swords of an invisible army.

Irene drew into her nostrils the clear, pungent air, with the cold smell of salt and sea-weed in it. Kicking herself free of the robe, she suggested:

"Let's go and sit on a rock and smoke, Tom."

He stopped the motor obediently. Irene sprang out and led the way through tall grass and scrubby bushes of wild roses to a beach of white sand. She settled herself in a crevice of a big boulder and held out her hand for a cigarette.

Two matches sputtered out in the gust; the third, sheltered in the man's hand, was dying down when Irene grasped his fingers firmly and succeeded in getting her cigarette connected with the last spasmodic flare of the flame.

Their faces were close together again; but Irene was intent on her puffing.

"There—I've got it going!" she cried and filled her lungs with the fragrant smoke.

"But I haven't any light," he complained.

"Here—take mine," she returned and handed him her cigarette. "Light yours from that."

For a time they smoked in silence. Dillon, throwing an arm about her shoulders, drew her to him.

"Why do you suppose I brought you out here tonight?" he asked suddenly. "Can you guess, Irene?"

It was characteristic of Irene, in her gay indifference, to trust herself alone with Dillon at queer hours and in lonely places. It was characteristic of her, too, in her honesty, that she should meet his question without evasion.

"Yes—I can guess." She nodded her head decisively. "You're in love with me, Tom."

He laughed and tightened the pressure of his arm.

"Strange little devil!" he mused. "You're right; I'm in love with you. Now then—what about you?"

"Me?" She put her head on one side, weighing the matter. "Well—you're very nice, Tom. I like you." She gave him her brilliant smile; she wouldn't commit herself further—that was obvious.

"Of course you don't love me," he reflected aloud. "The point is, would you be willing to marry me anyhow?"

She took one of his fingers and squeezed it; it was her ingenuous way of showing her gratitude.

"You're nice, Tom," she repeated. "And you're so damned modest, besides. Any woman would marry you, you know. Certainly, I should be only too glad and thankful."

Of her own volition she snuggled against his side and rubbed her cheek against his coat. It was a charming, ingratiating caress; but it was as sexless as the hug of a small boy who has just received the gift of a top.

He kissed her lightly; even her lips, cool and firm, tasting faintly of salt, seemed more like one of the buds on the wild-rose bushes than the parts of a human mouth.

"Very well then—that's settled," Dillon announced at length. "There's no need to get down to particulars this evening."

Irene was hard at work on her cigarette again; brushing from her skirt the ashes that had settled there during the brief embrace, she remarked:

"As to George—he's really a dear; he's been so kind. I'd feel like the devil if I thought he was going to come out on the wrong end of this."

Irene evidently wasn't averse to talking business, despite the moon-light and the romantic avowals of a moment ago.

Dillon patted her, with indulgent gentleness, on her straight little back.

"Now don't worry about George, dear," he assured her. "We'll fix up a satisfactory annuity for him."

Irene tossed her cigarette away and jerked her cravat back to position.

"An annuity?" She shook her head with decision. "George would hate that. You don't know him. Give it to him in a lump, so he can gamble with it for all he's worth."

"Certainly not!" Dillon exclaimed. "He'd be penniless in a year. No—George is a good sort. He's well worth being protected against himself."

Irene's eyes were wide and uncomprehending.

"You don't *know* George!" she persisted. "He doesn't want to be protected; he wants to have his fun. He wouldn't thank you for your annuity; why, he'd be miserable if he thought he was safe. You don't understand gamblers, Tom."

Dillon was ironically smiling.

"Well—we'll see," he temporized. "Never mind about it now."

"He took her hands and looked with quizzical intensity into her eyes.

"See here, Irene!" he challenged her. "Would you be miserable if you thought you were safe?"

"Why—I don't know," she faltered. "What do you mean?"

"I mean," he told her earnestly, "that, with me, you *will* be safe. There'll be no peril, no chance, in your life."

She bit her lips in perplexity. "I never considered it in that way," she admitted. "Shall I be quite safe?"

"What nonsense!" he exclaimed. "Isn't that your main reason for marrying me?"

"Oh, no!" Her voice had an injured note.

"Well then, *why* under the sun—?" He showed himself at a loss.

"Because—" she laughed excitedly

and sprang to her feet—"because I want to feel that all those horses belong to me!"

* * *

It was after midnight when Irene and Dillon got back to the Mirbeau House; but there was still a scattering of people on the porch to witness her hearty hand-shake and brisk military salute. Glances were exchanged, of course—not signals of spite, however, rather of amused tolerance. The horse-show crowd didn't condemn such intimate excursions; they simply looked wise and informed one another in silence that they had their eyes open. They could put two and two together; they could also accept the sum-total with perfect equanimity.

Irene lingered for a while on the porch, chatting vivaciously and enjoying to the full the prospect of slipping her trump-card out of her sleeve in the near future.

"Where's George?" she asked at length, interrupting herself in the midst of an ecstatic word-picture of the moonlight on the water.

"Just went upstairs!" Tom Weston supplied the information glibly.

"Just fell up!" his brother corrected him.

Irene laughed. "If that's the case, the poor boy probably needs me. Good-night!"

In their room, Williams was sitting on his bed, his shoulders hunched over, his hands hanging laxly between his knees. His eyes roved in dejection up and down his long legs. He had got himself out of all his clothes but his undershirt, his breeches and boots.

"Hello, Irene!"

He gave her a sweet smile, then mumbled apologetically, "I wish to God I wasn't so tall. I can't seem to get at my feet, you know."

He sighed out his unutterable weariness.

She sat down beside him and ran her fingers through his tousled hair.

"Never mind, George—I'll fix you up," she promised him.

Noticing the smouldering stump of a cigarette between his lips, she whisked it away.

"It's lucky I came in when I did," she scolded him. "You'd have had a nasty burn."

"Thanks!" He was drearily humble. "How'll I get on without you, I wonder?"

The question brought him back to the present.

"What about it?" His voice showed eagerness. "Did he live up to schedule?"

"Indeed he did!" she cried. "Tom's a dear."

"Devilish glad—for you," he told her.

His animation died out on the instant. He flung himself back on the bed and stretched his legs. "I say, Irene—I'm sorry; but those boots hurt."

At once she dropped to her knees and tugged his feet clear. "There now!" Her voice had a maternal solicitude. She flung the heavy boots under the bed.

"You're a darling," he acknowledged.

Irene got up and went over to the dressing-table. She had her hair plaited for the night before Williams, yawning helplessly, could tug his head free of the pillow.

"You're worth it," he suddenly announced, worrying himself out of his tight breeches.

"So are you, George." She tossed her yellow braids over her shoulders and unknotted her cravat. "Tom's a generous sort."

"Oh—me!" Williams was all scorn for himself. He had his undershirt half-way over his head and was plunging about clumsily. It wasn't till he had fetched up against the bureau that he achieved sufficient steadiness to throw the garment off. He grinned foolishly at her.

"I was so amused at everybody, a minute ago," Irene remarked. "They were all on the porch—"

Williams was surveying his shaggy person with infantile helplessness.

"D'y know where my pajamas are?" he asked in a plaintive mumble.

Irene, quite business-like, pulled out

a suit-case from under the dresser and extracted the articles.

"On the porch, were they?" Williams was climbing into the white trousers. "Looked suspicious, eh?"

She nodded smilingly.

"Well—you can't blame them," he decided. "They've all been there themselves."

He tumbled into his bed.

"Would you mind turning out the light when you're ready?" he asked.

Irene laughed at him over her shoulder.

"I suppose they *have* all been there," she said. "But Tom and I—we just talked a while and then went to Hill-Top for supper."

His only reply was an ineffably drowsy grunt.

CHAPTER III

IRENE adored the Newport show; and this year the festivities held a special significance. Each time she put her boot into the groom's hand and sprang into the saddle, she swept the ring and the boxes with a challenging glance. Her mind was darting forward to the time when she should be reading in the newspapers: "Hunter class. Blue, Dillon's Glamis—or any one of a half dozen other picturesque names—Mrs. Dillon up."

This vision of a triumphant future had no essential difference, in its elements, from the vivid past. Irene had no idea of entering the ranks of the fashionable matrons. She was aware that Dillon had never made one of the aristocratic world; if he had had ambitions along that line, he certainly would not have picked her out for a possible wife. His wealthy friends were just exhibitors, like himself. To Irene, the approaching marriage meant simply a kaleidoscopic succession of shows. She would ride the Dillon horses and harvest the blue ribbons. Hers was a naïve forecast, it was merely an image of the past, with the one delightful gain from the fact that she would own the horses she exhibited.

There had been just one trifling difficulty on this first day of the Newport show to mark the occasion. Dillon himself had been unreasonable, almost surly in fact, on the matter of the hunters. He had sought out Irene several times with a stubborn protest.

"You've got enough to do in the saddle classes," he had insisted. "Let George take over the jumpers."

But to his appeals she always opposed a laughing refusal. "Nonsense! George is riding badly today. Besides, I'd hate to stand on the side-lines and see somebody else having the fun."

Dillon gave in—but with a bad grace that annoyed her.

"Why under the sun should you be so queer—just because of last night?" she asked him.

"Because I have the *right* now," he had returned shortly.

It was a vivid autumn day, with the air keenly pure and heady as wine and the sky a clear metallic blue. Every sound had a sharp distinctness. Each leaf possessed a clear-cut individuality. It was a world of bold silhouettes, of hard, firm outlines. The white fence around the ring, the green turf, the rich browns of the horses and the rainbow-hued frocks in the boxes all seemed of a dazzling newness. The whole scene had toy-like brilliance; it was of that particular brightness that one associates with gay enamels.

Irene was wearing a habit of dark green, with a gardenia in the lapel of her coat. One corner of a pistachio-colored handkerchief protruded from her pocket. Her soft hat matched her habit. From her earliest recollections, horse-shows had put her on her mettle as nothing else could do. The ring held an intoxication for her. She loved the precise beat of hoofs on hard ground, the whirring of wheels, the creak of straining girths and the impatient snorts of the animals. Her nostrils quivered to the pungent reek of the horses' sweat, to the smell of leather and the dry odor of tanbark, with its queer suggestion of cedar-pencil shavings. The feel of a horse's distended belly

against her legs, the stubborn tug of the reins and the sensation, when she swung easily in the saddle, of a pounding flight through space—all this carried its particular thrill; and nothing enraptured her like the powerful rippling of the beast's silken muscles under her. For everyone, there is some special activity that quickens the sensibilities and the pulses; with Irene, horses alone could awaken every nerve of her body.

It was late. The sun had dropped behind the roof of the box-enclosure. The chill of an autumn evening was in the air now. The boxes were emptying; the few women who remained were snuggling into their furs. Irene was not riding in the last class of the day; she stood outside the ring, her elbows on the fence, and chatted gaily with Dillon.

It was the hunter class and they were close to the hurdle. Dillon, with a moody absorption, was watching Irene; her eyes never left the horses. She would strain forward eagerly over the rail, her wide eyes judging the action of each beast in its mad gallop for the barrier; as it plunged, she would step back, throw one hand over her face for protection against the flying bits of turf and, by a sharp nod or a decisive shake of the head, would set her stamp on the rider's performance.

Suddenly she drew her shoulders together nervously and, taking one arm off the rail, tapped Dillon on the shoulder. George Williams had just slipped into the saddle.

"I wonder!" she whispered. "George has been rotten all day and Glamis is such a fool."

"George has been drinking too damned much," Dillon commented.

"I know it; I've been telling him so all afternoon." She was uneasy.

Williams, a superbly careless rider, was bearing down on them now. Irene squeezed Dillon's arm with involuntary excitement; she had raised herself on her toes and was leaning far over the rail. The whites of the horse's eyes flashed wickedly; Williams was smiling with good-natured unconcern.

At the moment of the spring, Irene kicked back with one leg and became tensely rigid, as if she were lifting the horse and rider over the hurdle herself. Glamis had hurled himself forward too soon; but he cleared the barrier mightily, for all that.

A flick of foam caught Irene full in the face. Brushing it away, she cried, "Well—thank God *that's* over, anyhow!"

But with the opposite hurdle it was quite another matter. Glamis galloped for the flimsy white obstacle with headlong impetuosity; each impact of his hoofs against the ground sent him ahead at a bounding leap. His action had as tremendous a forward impulsion as if, with each spring, he had plunged down a steep incline. Irene gave a low whistle of disapproval at the precise moment when the horse flung himself at the hurdle. His knees, doubled over the panting breast, struck squarely against the topmost bar of the gate. At once the whole improvised structure collapsed with a clatter.

The rest was a mad confusion. Somewhere in the boxes an excitable woman screamed. A group of men at the fence, near the hurdle, took to their heels at a panicky scamper. There came the sound of splintering wood as Glamis, snorting and kicking with savage fury, rolled about helplessly in a choking cloud of dust. Williams, hurled from the saddle, had struck his forehead against the jagged end of a plank. Still dazed from the blow, he was groggily striving to scramble out of range of Glamis' flashing hoofs.

"I *knew* it!" had been Irene's single laconic comment on the spectacular tumble.

She took the matter with sportsmanlike calm; she was used to adventures of this sort. Swiftly she scaled the fence and ran across the ring.

Half a dozen grooms had pulled the bloody, dishevelled Williams to his feet when she got to him. He was tottering slightly, but with a genial, mazed smile

had already begun to brush the dust off his knees.

"Hello!" His greeting was matter-of-fact. "That damned fool acted like a dog with a tin-can tied to its tail."

He wiped the sweat and grimy blood off his forehead and tucked an unsteady hand through the crook of her arm.

"You're the damned fool, if you want my opinion," Irene let him know. She laughed up at him, however, and pressed his arm against her side. "You'll have to get that cut attended to, George."

Glamis had been tugged and jerked to his feet by now. A lather of spume trickled over the delicate veins of his neck. His head hung down dejectedly. A shudder coursed over his sleek hide. Two of the ring attendants held the reins and eyed the conquered brute with a wary intensity.

Irene left her husband and walked boldly up to Glamis.

"We all understand, you know," she told the misanthropic animal. "It's not your fault. George was drunk."

Putting up one gloved hand, she patted his neck, then pressed her fingers caressingly to his quivering muzzle.

All at once Glamis reared furiously, well-nigh whipping the two attendants off the ground. As he danced at a crazy caper on his hind legs, Irene looked up at him with a quizzical protest.

"Oh very well—if you're in such a nasty temper!" she cried. She showed not the slightest fear.

The next moment she felt herself gripped by the arm. Someone was dragging her out of the danger zone. It was Dillon.

"For heaven's sake, Irene!" His voice held a decided rebuke.

"What's the matter, Tom?" She was at a loss.

"There's no point in running *after* danger," he returned with heat.

"Danger?" She frowned out her perplexity. "How absurd!"

He drew her over to the fence and, leaning an arm on the rail, bent close

to her, with a new determination in his handsome flushed face.

"See here, Irene!" he announced. "Don't you feel you owe me something? After all, I think it's up to you to make me *some* return for loving you."

She tapped her riding-crop reflectively against one of her high boots.

"Why—of course," she answered him at length. "I owe you a great deal. I'm willing to do my part, Tom."

"All right!" He nodded his head at her with gruff decision. "I have a protective interest in you now. I possess the right to dictate certain terms in future. For instance, it's my selfish desire to marry a woman with both legs and both arms intact. Do you understand?"

He did not wait for her reply.

"You've got to promise me that you'll give up riding my hunters." He pounded his fist against the rail to emphasize the words. "Give it up right *here and now*, Irene!"

Her eyes dilated.

"Why—I've never heard anything so ridiculous," she protested. "Just because George had been drinking—"

He interrupted her sharply. "It may be ridiculous—but I happen to insist on it. I have some sense—even where you're concerned. I'm going to marry you, you see. I don't mean to handicap myself by giving in to you at the very beginning."

Irene had caught her under-lip in her teeth. She looked at him silently, her expression that of an injured child.

"But this is so unkind—so unjust," she burst out at last.

"Never mind." He shrugged her criticism away. "You'll promise me—that's the point."

She turned from him with a discouraged sigh. "Oh yes—I promise. You put it in such a way that I can't do anything else. But I think you've taken unfair advantage of me, just the same."

"I'm withdrawing all the hunters from competition," he called after her, "so you won't have the annoyance of watching others ride them."

She shrugged her shoulders petu-

lantly and hurried over to the judges' stand. Williams, with a neat cross of adhesive plaster over his left eye, was lolling on his flexible spine inside the thatched pavilion. One leg was stretched out, the other rested on the chair in front of him. A cigarette dropped from his tired mouth and he was joking with a neat stenographer.

As Irene paused beside him he threw an arm about her waist. She looked down at him silently for a long moment. All at once, scalding tears rushed to her eyes; thunder-struck at such incredible weakness, she blinked impatiently and kept the drops unshed. Her husband, reeking with whiskey, his whole shambling appearance showing the befuddlement of drink, had become in a flash strangely, ridiculously precious to her. He seemed at this moment the personification of the lawless, adventurous life she was giving up. As she watched him, it was as if she were casting a sad glance over her shoulder at the vivid rush and insecurity of the irrecoverable past. It had never been the way of the good-natured, worthless Williams to dictate harsh terms. Absorbed by his own perverse impulses, entangled in his whimsical self-indulgence, he had let her go free and unrestrained.

Irene, with a defiant toss of her small head, turned her attention to Dillon. He had just strolled up to one of the judges and was conversing with easy self-assurance. He stood confessed, the man of arrogant power, smugly secure in his money and over-weening influence. His ruddy skin had the glow of health; his black eyes flashed a condescending authority; his whole body, an observer could somehow tell, was as sleek and well cared for as the hide of one of his horses.

The two men presented a striking contrast, with the advantage all on Dillon's side; but in Irene's heart a fierce tenderness for her lanky, dishevelled, worn-out husband awoke.

It was dark now and bitterly cold. The last class had been judged and the grooms were leading the blanketed horses out to the stables. In the dis-

tance, one of the orchestra was lugging his shrouded cello through the empty echoing grand-stand. The stenographer had collected her notes and put on her hat. Out in the ring one of the judges, stretching his arms over his head, gave vent to an audible yawn.

Irene shivered under the oppression of her gloom.

Williams smiled up at her.

"Aren't you a happy little thing, though?" he queried blithely.

"Yes—happy as the devil," Irene told him with ill-concealed bitterness.

CHAPTER IV

A DIVORCE in the horse-show world is almost as casual and as easily run off as a marriage. Naming a woman as co-respondent doesn't damage her reputation; neither does it unduly affect one's friendship with her. So Irene, with a minimum of effort, shed a dusty skin and gained a brilliant new one. Williams got his generous settlement; Miss Lucille Edgar bought herself an extravagant motor.

"It's sordid—but true," Williams had commented ruefully. "Even a co-respondent has her price."

In a month's time Lucille had appeared at the City Hall with Gregory Weston and taken out a license to marry.

Irene and Dillon went directly to the Lenox farm after their marriage. It was a splendid estate. The house, a big white colonial dwelling with a two-storied portico of Corinthian columns, faced a sweep of smooth grass. Wonderful old elms stood guard everywhere: circular groups of them over-shadowed the level lawn; their high, straight trunks, like gray monoliths, bounded the winding driveway at regular intervals; a gigantic cluster of them surrounded the house, dwarfing its generous proportions and giving it a quaint, confiding, nestling aspect.

To Irene, however, the stables held a fascination that the house, for all its roomy comfort, quite lacked. She really didn't care whether or not the furniture in her dining-room would have been the

boast of historical museums; her interest in the spacious entrance hall, with its staircase that had been brought over from an old English country seat, was but cursory. Her excited glee was reserved for the stables.

Ah—and the tan-bark ring, a vast edifice that no elm tree extant could reduce to insignificance! She loved to look at the building from outside, letting her eyes roam over the acres of irregular roofs and counting silently all those weather-vanes in the shape of horses that glittered in the sun. The interior awed her, too. The ring itself was immense, with a wide gallery and a pointed roof spanned by massive beams. The smell of the place delighted her. Tan-bark and leather and the pungent fumes peculiar to the horses themselves! The most famous of the prize-winners were housed in stalls about the ring; Irene fed them sugar and congratulated Shipley, the trainer, for the vivid little pictures on the sanded floor outside the stalls.

The cow-barns and dairies Irene strolled through once with Dillon. They evoked about the same polite interest as the house itself. The tan-bark ring and the stables, however—these she came back to again and again with undiminished rapture.

It was thus only gradually that Irene came to realize the essential change in her life. Absorbed by her delight in all the bright new discoveries about her, she had let herself drift through the spring months and into the summer. Then at last she had awakened to the sense of the intimate solitude of it all. Here were she and her husband immured alone in the Lenox fastness. The period of annual shows was close at hand. Her oldtime friends must be already collecting for the itinerant festivities. Apparently Dillon had neglected to get the blooded caravan ready for its pageant-like pilgrimage.

"By the way, Tom," she reminded him one morning as they were making the usual round of the stables, "do you realize it's about time we quit pasture? We've got to get busy."

He laughed indulgently. "Don't worry, my dear. I haven't been idle. Things are quite ship-shape."

"You've really been getting things ready?" She showed her surprise.

"Oh, we run so smoothly here that there's never any obvious fuss," he told her, with just a suggestion of condescension in his tone.

She was silent for a moment. Then, "But why didn't you tell me?" she asked. "You know how I love to help."

"There's no possible need of your bothering about it," he returned. "Shipley and I can manage alone. He's a competent fellow, Shipley."

"Yes indeed—I know that," she assured him. "Still, it *does* make me feel out of it, to have the whole business carried on over my head."

Dillon, taking her hand, patted it conciliatingly.

"That's exactly the point, Irene," he said. "We *are* rather out of it—both you and I. It's always been my idea to turn all the active work over to my men as soon as I married."

She weighed this with wide-eyed intensity for a time.

"You mean," she asked sharply at last, "that you don't intend to take any active part in shows now?"

He nodded. "I want a rest, you see. I'd much rather just look on for a change."

"But what the devil's the fun in that?" she flashed out. "Why, you'd be bored to death, sitting all alone in a box—"

"No indeed!" he interrupted her. "You're forgetting that you'll be there with me, Irene. I shan't be alone in the box."

"How can I be in the box and the ring at the same time?" she asked. She was standing still now and facing him with a steady defiance.

"You *won't* be in the ring, Irene—that's the point," he returned, his voice good-natured but firmly commanding. "We shall go on exhibiting, of course. We're through with the horsy gang, though. I married you to get you out of that sordid mess."

She shook her head decisively. "You can't do it, Tom. I've always been in it. I couldn't get out—even if I wanted to. I'm no better than the others, you know."

"Perhaps." He shrugged, dismissing the protest as unimportant. "It's nonsense to say you couldn't get out of it. As a matter of fact, you *are* out of it right now; and you're going to stay out of it. So there we are, my dear. It seems simple enough to me."

The strange part of this brief conflict was that, though it appeared to take Irene unawares, she yet had somehow expected it. Dillon cared for her—there was no doubt whatever of that; but to a man of his sort, love manifested itself by an aggressive attitude of protection, combined with an indulgent show of superiority.

It had always been taken for granted that he was a power. Once his infatuation for Irene had had its inevitable reward, the domineering strain in him asserted itself. Naturally, he had never been called on to act an unselfish part; from the beginning he had displayed a staunch egotism to the world and had been admired for his unflinching honesty. So, in his tenderest aspect, he must needs preen a bit. A man of inflexible self-assurance is often the most chivalrous, the most sturdily domestic of husbands; indeed, marriage offers him a supreme opportunity for the particular form of old-fashioned tyranny that masquerades under the name of devotion.

Dillon had a suave pride in his mission of shielding Irene from her former harum-scarum intimates; it proved to his own satisfaction his fundamental generosity and his ability to act for her in an emergency. There could really be no question now of equality in their relation. It is surprising how many men of wealth and easy sophistication display in a short time after marriage all the intolerance of more benighted, middle-class males. The wife, discouraged by the smug insolence of her adoring swain of a few months back, usually gives up the struggle and consents to be over-

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ridden and intimidated. Irene was of a different stamp.

Intrepid courage she had and a keenness for scenting out injustice. She and Williams, for all their random irregularities and their total inability to appreciate decency, had yet possessed an invincible sense of fairness. That had been the one firm standard in the promiscuous welter of their life. Even in the first months of her marriage, while she was still in the full tide of her enthusiasm, Irene had been vaguely aware that her new husband was indulging his bent for bullying condescension. She could feel a tremulous joy in her explorations and at the same time study the man who had given her so much.

It had not taken her long to come to a full understanding of him. When he was content, he had as sleek a placidity of mind as of body. The moment anything occurred to disturb his smoothly running brain, however, he lost his repose. A congested flush would steal over his face and he would become heavily irritable; it would be as if some turbid sediment within him had come to the surface, confusing and angering him; and, in his choleric daze, a sullen, furtive craft would awake. Quick outbursts of temper, combined strangely with cunning, were the result. On these occasions, Irene would feel a baffled inability to make any straight appeal to his reason.

She was by no means cowed, however; all her bright, defiant bravery was still there to be tapped at need. Since she was fair, she could make generous allowances. Dillon tried his hardest to keep down his uglier traits. He did want her to be happy; his genuine love taught him a certain gentleness. Besides, he had, in a way, a right to complain of the bargain he had struck. He had confidently expected Irene's indifference to soften. He must be convinced now of his error. Of course it would never have occurred to her to shut him out of her bedroom; but anything like real tenderness she calmly withheld.

She made no attempt to conceal her

anger that morning in the stables. They had walked back to the house in antagonistic silence. When they reached the wide terrace above the gardens, Irene perched herself on the balustrade and lit a cigarette; Dillon threw himself into a chair, his arrogant eyes on her straight, slim back. The struggle wasn't over yet.

Her opening words had a quaint irrelevance. "What do you expect me to do with all those new habits?"

"Wear them, my dear!" He was jovial.

She ignored this. "The proper time to tell me your plans would have been in New York, when I was being fitted. You really lied to me, Tom, by keeping quiet. That's the way it seems to me, anyhow."

"Nonsense!" he scoffed. "I've never bothered to tell people my plans. I don't intend to now."

"But you knew I had no idea—" she persisted.

"I was content to let things slide," he returned. "And I thought that when a woman married she was willing to give the man all her time for a few months. The very fact of my *considering* exhibiting horses this summer ought to shut you up and make you feel damned grateful."

"But you should have *told* me." She was firm on that point. "I've been honest with you—about everything. I don't see why you wanted to marry me, if you were determined to keep me off your horses. I'm not fitted for anything but riding."

He laughed out his brusque amusement.

"You don't see why I wanted to marry you!" he echoed her words derisively. "Would you like the unvarnished truth, Irene?"

"Never mind." She tossed her half-finished cigarette away with impatience.

Dillon got to his feet and, grasping her genially by the shoulders, announced:

"I suppose it's never occurred to you that you might get to work and have a child."

Irene considered this with a reflective frown. Obviously, the proposition had for her a startling novelty. A tangible residue of an alliance! A complication of that sort was beyond understanding. To Irene and her irresponsible intimates, marriage had always been a happy-go-lucky affair of the present; it had had no connection whatever with posterity.

"Well?" Dillon broke the silence. "You're a bold little thing. You're not afraid, are you?"

She laughed. "Of course not! But I just hadn't thought of it, Tom."

"After all," he put it up to her, "you do owe me a lot, Irene. Every man expects some return on an investment. I'm not asking a great deal. Most fellows wouldn't *have* to ask, you know."

It was a direct appeal to her sense of fairness. She looked up at him, a frank response in her eyes.

"You think it's my *duty* to you, eh?" she asked earnestly.

"I certainly do," he returned.

She nodded her head in thoughtful agreement.

"All right then, we'll call it a bargain. By next year at this time, we'll be quits. Then I can do as I please, Tom." Her tone had a matter-of-fact firmness. Prospective motherhood manifestly didn't appeal to her as an exalted mission; it was a rather practical way of paying off an obvious debt.

Dillon gave her an indulgent shake.

"We'll call it a bargain," he said, as if closing a business deal.

"You understand," Irene warned him, "that I shan't know what to do with it, after it's born. I couldn't, to save my neck, have any love for a baby."

"Oh, that's what they all say," Dillon returned imperturbably.

With a gentle, sympathetic pat on her back, he turned away and strolled into the house.

CHAPTER V

THEY left the Lenox farm the first of August. At every show, Irene in her box looked on at the gay activities of

the ring with ill-concealed regret. She felt like an exile. It was as if, stranded in the uneventful present, she were forced to watch her own vivid past rush by her. The Dillon horses swept at a superb stride around the enclosure; they won the usual number of blues and championships. They tossed their gallant heads at her, with an audacious fluttering of the cherished ribbons. All the sounds and sights and smells she loved came to her and exasperated her. Glamis, with a man on his back, curvetted capriciously to the lilting music; Cawdor, a nervous, malicious beast, shied at the bray of the bugle and aimed vicious kicks at the grooms who sought to restrain him. The red-and-black Dillon traps whirled around the ring; the four-in-hand thundered by with a tantalizing jingle. Irene, as a penniless free-lance, had been in the midst of the gaiety. Now the finest of the horses were hers and she was a mere spectator!

Dillon's interest always waned in the middle of the afternoon. Sitting beside her, he would yawn out his fatigue. Then he would get to his feet, collect her wraps and exclaim, "Oh—let's go!"

The signal would be a positive relief to Irene.

"I wonder," he mused once, "if I'm losing my interest in horses. Damned if it doesn't look like it."

At first the old crew of Irene's intimates had taken casual possession of the Dillon box. Irene was delighted. Groups of three or four would saunter up from the ring, after a class, and throw themselves carelessly into the chairs with an innocent air of proprietorship. Lucille Edgar brought her new husband along with her; old Weston, resplendent in plaids, would take up a sprawling position in the front of the box, while his son Tom, perched on the rail, dangled his thin legs out into the aisle. Even George Williams ambled up and shook hands good-naturedly and joked in his fatigued way with Irene. This easy conviviality was doomed, however, to a swift extinction.

Dillon, surly and flushed with impa-

tience, let it go on for the space of one show.

Then he announced:

"Our box isn't going to be a half-way house for the riffraff any longer."

"Do you want me to snub them?" Irene asked sharply. "Because I won't, Tom. They're my own crowd—"

"You won't have to snub them," he returned. "I can settle them myself."

At the next show the box was free of the birds of passage.

"I didn't *snub* them," he informed Irene. "I simply informed them to keep out—gave them the gate. They understood."

"Very well—but wait till next year," she said.

The crowd that took the place of the riffraff had the distinction of being Dillon's acknowledged friends. At a merely cursory glance, it would not have been difficult to differentiate them from their predecessors in the box. The men had for the most part a sleekly cushioned appearance and a choleric tinge that betokened easy living and a fashionably high blood-pressure; they wouldn't have been at home on a horse's back. Their wives wore expensive gowns and usually betrayed the strain of a losing race against fat; they lacked the tonic bluntness of women like Lucille Edgar. They were all older than Irene and their thoughts were unflinchingly focused on their own trappings. She could find no conversational meeting-ground with them. They panted after the fashionable world but never caught up with it. So far as genuine distinction went, they missed fire ludicrously. The real horsey gang had more claims to recognition on that score.

The point was, however, that these people had money and owned their own horses. They were exhibitors and thus free of the professional taint. As Mrs. Dillon, Irene made one of their dimly enlightened sphere. They therefore accepted her in all generosity; but behind her back they could still laud their "democracy" in letting by-gones be by-gones. Dillon himself was genially cordial to them. It appeared to please him

to think that he could set his wife on so privileged a pedestal. Irene often wondered, with an impatient protest, whether her husband hoped at present to mold himself and her according to the prevalent pattern. His friends and their stolid wives looked upon their horses as so many financial assets; but they hadn't a glimmer of true interest in the magnificent beasts. If it had been the vogue to exhibit one's diamonds, these people would have gone into the activity with just the same patience and stupidity they displayed at horse-shows.

"They make me *sick*," Irene told Dillon time and again.

"You'll learn to like them," he would return, his tone implying that she must be educated up to their standards.

Irene, in November, had come to the end of her resources.

"Let's go back to Lenox, Tom!" she exclaimed. "I've seen enough horses. Give somebody else the box for the New York show."

"That's exactly my idea," he agreed. "I'll send Shipley down with a string. He can have the box."

When they had been at the farm for a week, Irene suddenly announced one night at dinner, "I think I'm going to have that baby, Tom."

"Good!" He gave her a frankly adoring smile. "You're keeping to your agreement like a man, Irene. Aren't you glad we made it a friendly understanding?"

"I never refuse a reasonable request, you know," she reminded him proudly.

"I really don't think it would have made so very much difference if you *had* refused," he told her. He was unable to resist this display of good-natured mastery.

Irene bit her lips angrily.

"You can be damned unfair, Tom!" she exclaimed. "I would *never* have said a thing like that."

CHAPTER VI

IRENE accepted her ordeal with sportsmanlike composure. Her health was excellent. Dillon treated her with elabo-

rate solicitude. He was always the aggressively protective husband, shielding her from worries, keeping track of her diet, telling her many times a day, "Now, just forget about it, Irene. Don't brood, my dear."

His every glance, however, was one of appraisal and investigation. He couldn't have focused her attention more effectively on her condition if he had gone about from morning till night with a tape-measure in his hands. Irene took his over-conscientious attentions for what they were worth. She saw him as the naively boastful male. He was unable to conceal his pride in his own share of the proceedings. After all, he'd been the fountain-head; Irene was merely the very precious tributary vessel.

"Queer, isn't it, that the woman should have all the actual fuss and bother?" he would comment with mock humility.

Though his officiousness annoyed her, Irene remained active and bright and uncomplaining. She would see the thing through without protest; she would get this duty sensibly off her mind. It did not occur to her that she was keeping up her spirits only by grim determination; she wasn't the sort to recognize symptoms of unhappiness. She spent much of her time in the stables. For hours at a stretch she would sit outside a stall stroking the glossy neck of one of the horses, snuggling its sensitive muzzle in her warm hand, conversing gaily with it and resting her cheek, in passionate tenderness, against its sleek, hot hide. Involuntarily, she sought this mute sympathy as a refuge from the arrogant, selfish love of her husband. As the months slipped by, her adoration centered fiercely on Glamis. His trumpeting snort of recognition, his impatience for her caresses, delighted her. She would gaze into his great liquid eyes and, rubbing his mane, would laugh at him happily.

The doctors and nurses arrived in August. At once everything was a bustle of preparation.

"I say, Irene," Dillon asked one eve-

ning as he sat beside her and held her hands, "shall I withdraw the horses from the Newport show next week?"

He seemed to think that the whole mechanism of the universe should cease at the moment of the child's birth.

"Of course not," she replied. "There's no need of keeping *them* out of things. We don't stay at home every time a mare foals."

She still took a calm, unexalted view of her mission.

On the first day of the Newport festivities, the baby was born. It wasn't till twenty-four hours later that Irene awoke from the swirling murk into which she had suddenly fallen—an outer limbo of existence, echoing with thunderous shocks. Over this field of desolation she had galloped on a horse's back, tearing a terrified way through tangled fences of barbed wire.

She sighed, opened her eyes, and found herself back from her fiendish jaunt and in her own bedroom at Lenox. Dillon stood beside her, a bundle of pushing fingers and toes in his arms.

"Here he is!" he whispered, taking the cue of caution from the nurse's uplifted, commanding finger. Bending over the bed, he displayed, for Irene's approval, the drivelling, wailing, purplish face of his heir.

But Irene was in no mood for sentimentality or evasion. She shut her eyes tight and shook her head. It was his child; her own torture had given her no sense of a share in the possession. She'd done her duty—that was all.

Dillon's gentle, cajoling voice beat on her tired brain. "Yesterday, when you were so sick, we thought the boy wouldn't live. We *just* pulled him through, Irene."

She turned her head wearily on the pillow and sighed again.

"Townsend says a woman should never ride horseback," Dillon went on softly. "Our first attempt came near fooling us." He was tenderly jocular.

Irene opened her eyes wide; she had read a threat into his words.

"It's my first and last attempt," she

told him sharply. "I'm through, you know."

He put a soothing hand to her forehead.

"There, there!" he coaxed her. "There's no need of talking about that now, my dear."

Impatiently Irene waved the baby away.

"How are the horses doing at Newport, Tom?" she asked.

Dillon was taken aback by her absurdly abrupt veer. He cradled his son to his breast with a new warmth, as if to comfort it for its mother's insolent indifference. A sullen, injured frown wrinkled his forehead.

"You're *not* my idea—" he burst out, but checked himself to a proper restraint. "Oh, the horses are doing well enough," he said, but his voice had an edge of annoyance.

"I'm glad of that." A faint pleasure sounded through her words.

Dillon's offended dignity still struggled for utterance. She had slighted him; his pride could not brook it. Without being fully aware of what he said, he found himself hinting of an occurrence that he himself had given stern orders should be kept from Irene. The involuntary impulse to hurt her had betrayed him.

"That is, Glamis—" he began and at once bit his tongue with a furious regret.

"Glamis!" Irene cried tremulously.

"Oh—nothing much." Dillon floundered back to safety. "Threw a man and barked his own shins." His face was purple with chagrin and remorse.

"It's not true!" Irene contradicted him firmly. "Glamis has been killed—I know it. Don't try to lie about it. I want to hear what happened, Tom."

Dillon took her grim repression for a calm acceptance of the inevitable. Seizing her hand and stroking it with a nervous intensity, he stammered out his contrition.

"I'm sorry—*damned* sorry, Irene." His voice shook. "I ought to be—"

"Never mind!" She was strident in her impatience. "What happened?"

Then he blurted out the truth.

"Glamis broke a leg. They shot him yesterday."

For a moment Irene lay still. Then her lips stiffened to a thin tense line; the muscles around her mouth had contracted and suddenly grown taut. She put a groping hand to her face and burst into convulsive sobbing. It was the first time in her life that she had cried with frank abandon. Irene herself, in the full tide of her weeping, could still wonder at this weak surrender. Only her illness and unutterable fatigue made it even faintly comprehensible. The horse's death would have hurt her at any time; but, with her abounding health, she could have made a fierce, tearless show of bravado. Today, however, what she felt she must confess helplessly.

Dillon was protesting incoherently, "For God's sake, Irene—now, for God's sake! You mustn't act like this. Come—be sensible!"

She refused to be comforted.

"I can't help it. If only I could have been there. . . ." She drew her hand from his grasp and murmured in stubborn self-vindication, "I *can't* help it—but I loved Glamis. I don't love the baby; I'll never love it." Her words had a childish pathos.

The resentment that had been smouldering in Dillon flared now.

"You wouldn't have cared a *damn* if the boy'd died," he told her furiously. "You've got no real love or decency in you!"

In his hot rage he stumbled past the nurse, shrugging aside her indignant protest, and, striding out of the room, slammed the door after him. Then he felt the kneading tug of tiny hands at his left breast; he was still holding the baby against him.

CHAPTER VII

At the New York show in November, Irene rode the Dillon horses. Dillon had permitted himself the first great concession since their marriage. On that second day after her confinement Irene had suffered a dangerous relapse.

Her wiry strength had failed for a week to assert itself. Once she'd gained control over herself, however, her recovery had been rapid.

"Well," she announced one morning as she sat by her bedroom window, "you nearly finished me, Tom." She betrayed no rancor; she was merely making it clear to him that she understood the situation. "I'd never pretended I was going to love the baby, you know."

Dillon had been tremendously subdued by his fright of the past week. He stood beside Irene now and, fiddling with a tassel of the window-drapery, gave her a rueful smile.

"I oughtn't to have let my temper get the best of me," he admitted.

He couldn't make his capitulation complete, however.

"There's no doubt about it, my dear—you *were* nasty," he qualified his confession.

"No," she denied it firmly. "I just wasn't able to get up any enthusiasm. I was sick, and you and the baby bored me—that was all."

"Oh well, let's not talk about it," he protested. "I've been thinking, Irene." He paused and, with absent-minded absorption, began to braid the silken string of the tassel. "I do want to prove to you I'm sorry. How about a show, in the ring here, around the fifteenth of January? For your birthday, you know—"

"It would be splendid, Tom." She was eager. "We could have—"

He interrupted her quickly. "The Thompsons and Moores and Remsons and people like that."

Irene looked up at him with canny amusement.

"Your friends," she said.

"Yes—my friends," he returned. "Mine and yours don't mix, Irene. It would be a damned fine party if we got the two crowds together for a private show." He was indulgently ironic.

"See here, Tom." She nodded her head at him with decision. "If you really want to prove you're sorry, you'll please let me loose again with my own gang."

"But the trouble is," he lied, finding himself in a corner, "I've already talked to Ted Moore and Charley Remson about it."

"Oh, very well." Irene conceded the point. "But there's the New York show. I can ride in that. I can be with my friends there."

"You won't be strong enough—in November," he complained. "I can't see myself letting you overdo."

She could scoff good-naturedly at that. "Nonsense! I shall be as well as ever in a month."

She had already begun to pick flaws in his generosity. Dillon let go of the tassel and it banged smartly against the window-pane. He had somehow expected humble gratitude from her and quick, unqualified acceptance.

"So you want to take in the New York show, too?" he asked with involuntary gruffness.

"I certainly do," she replied. "I've told you all along that, after we got the baby off our minds, we'd be quits. I've been nice to your friends. I've let you be horrid to mine; now the least you can do is to be decent to them."

"Oh—all right." He gave in; but he made no effort to conceal his surliness. He felt injured and showed that he did.

"Shall we call *this* a bargain, too?" Irene put it up to him. "The other worked so well. This one will, if you'll keep up your end of it honestly."

Dillon nodded his grudging acceptance of her terms; but in his heart an unreasoning resentment stirred. Irene had taken the control of their affairs away from him; she had cheated him, filching the reins out of his hands by a skilful manoeuvre.

It was very soon evident, in New York, that Dillon was failing to live up to his promise. No intentional malice prompted him; confronted by the problem in the concrete, his nature showed its inability to bend to any acceptance of events that aroused his rancor. With sullen disapproval he held himself aloof, refusing to take any part what-

ever in the gaiety of the desultory, drifting crowd. It seemed to him at present that everything pointed to the grotesque folly of his marriage. For all his money and influence, he had been unable to effect the slightest improvement in Irene. She was simply one of the professional gang; and Dillon, seeing around him all the scamps with whom she had been involved in the past, felt himself somehow an object of pitying ridicule. Each vivaciously gossiping group he fancied was exchanging banter at his expense. It was impossible for him to conceal his anger or keep from flaunting his superiority.

Irene's spirits soared from the moment she swung into the saddle for the first class. The intoxication of the ring had swept over her. She had recaptured her precious birthright. In a flash the past year and a half had been obliterated. She was breasting the old bright current again; she could forget in her excitement that security had ever been hers. A rebellious courage surged up in her. Her eyes flashed a welcome to the blurred kaleidoscope of the boxes and seats under the glare of electricity; the dense, hot reek of the air seemed the whiff of freedom in her nostrils; the strumming music, the patter of applause quickened her heart. The bugle thrilled through her like a martial call to arms.

At present, Cawdor was her favorite among the Dillon animals. His headstrong, impetuous temper recalled the dead Glamis and awoke in her a warm response; moreover, his adoration for her made him pettish, passionately jealous and as sensitive as a lover to her caresses. If her attentions lapsed for a moment into mere absent-minded stroking, he showed a savage resentment. Irene had often protested hotly to herself that no horse would ever take the place of Glamis; but, in her care not to injure Cawdor's feelings, she had soon been tricked into a new affection that had all the intensity of the old. Cawdor had wheedled himself into the shrine that she had meant to

be Glamis's eternally. So she rode him to triumph in every class in which he was entered.

In her reckless happiness, all thought of discretion or dignity deserted Irene. She was constantly bending over her pommel to joke with the judges; she laughed out her thanks for each ribbon and, gaily pocketing the prize-money, directed a military salute at the gallery as she sent her horse forward at a plunging leap. Even the grooms received cordial nods as from one good fellow to another. Her excitement gave her more than ever the aspect of a gallant boy.

Between her classes, Irene ushered troops of her former intimates into her box. Just as in the old free-lance days, she would soon discover that the immediate vicinity held only George Williams, with the others making a constantly shifting background. In the rear of the box Dillon could be seen, glowering, scowling, making a fierce attempt to appear engrossed in the show over the shoulders of the riffraff. It was all a part of Irene's forgetfulness of the actual present that she should accept Williams without question on the former ground of understanding and comradeship. The night, when undressing in the same room they had discussed the future, might have been but last night.

Williams, as he lounged beside Irene, still smelled strongly of whiskey. His shoulders had the same tired droop; his bony frame was even more startlingly visible in all its sharp angles under his riding-clothes.

"But I've got no pet wolf at the door now," he told her casually. "I've been lucky as the devil."

"Ah—I'm so glad, George!" Irene congratulated him by shaking one of his tobacco-stained fingers.

He shrugged his shoulders.

"Yes, I'm lucky," he mumbled. "I never minded being hard up, though. I don't care a damn for money."

His gentle eyes met hers. He smiled at her quizzically. "Well—we had our fun, Irene."

He lit a cigarette and tossed the match over the railing.

They were silent for a moment.

"Happy, Irene?" he asked at length. She nodded. "Yes—now."

The laconic words told him the whole story of her married life.

"We knew you'd come back into things," he returned.

He got lurchingly to his feet.

Irene sprang up and took his arm.

"I'll be back soon!" she informed Dillon as she brushed past him.

"I'm leaving," he replied sulkily. "Can't stand this racket," and he jerked his head at his companions in the box. "I'll send the motor back for you."

"Thanks, Tom." Irene gave him a bright, friendly smile.

"I think he's trying to be patient, you know," she remarked to Williams when they were out of ear-shot.

"I suppose he is," Williams mused. "He's a bit shaky still, of course. He hasn't got around to speaking to *me* yet. But good Lord, I don't blame him. Why *should* he speak?"

Irene said nothing, but her eyes flashed.

During the two nights that remained of the show, Irene set herself to examine Dillon. She had soon noticed that, in his heavy petulance, he was seizing every possible opportunity to be insulting. Once, Lucille Weston had swaggered nonchalantly up to the box and, putting a hand on his shoulder, had asked, "Any room for me, Tom?"

He glared up at her, then directed a glance of bearish disdain at her hand. He made no effort to clear the chair beside him of his coat and hat.

Lucille, nothing daunted, snapped at him, "Well, can't you answer a civil question?"

Dillon, his haughty gaze on the ring, deigned to answer her at that. "This is my wife's box, not mine. Come in, if you want to. I've got no say as to who'll sit here and who won't. I should think you'd realize that by now."

"Oh, all right." Lucille gave him a contemptuous smile and, sweeping his wraps off the unoccupied chair, she

tossed them on his knee. "Irene won't object to me, I fancy," she told him with a scornful shrug as she sat down.

"Naturally not. I daresay she's *glad* to have you." Dillon at this moment intercepted a quick exchange of winks between Lucille and her husband. He jumped to his feet, flung his coat over his arm and stormed out of the box.

"Don't be a goose, Lucille." He heard Irene's gay protest. "Of course we want you—"

So it went. Irene was in no mood for compromise now. She understood that Dillon's hostility had become an uncontrollable force. She sensed a danger in his antagonism; and her spirit of gay rebellion received an added impetus from the realization. Still, as she watched his flushed face, with the dark blood congested in the swelling veins of his forehead, she felt not only defiant but desperately uneasy.

Dillon was in a towering rage; but more than once Irene caught in his hot lowering eyes a gleam of slow craftiness. He was pondering some scheme with caution and intentness. She knew that look of stealth; where Dillon was secretive, he was also bafflingly dishonest. He was planning some tricky scheme of circumvention; Irene's intuition warned her of that.

Her excitement kept her, however, from giving more than a glancing, cursory attention to her anxiety. For the most part, she was recklessly happy. Her moments of discouragement came when, during a brief musing silence, she would compare Dillon with Williams. A surge of tenderness would flow over her heart then: Williams remained the personification of the life she loved—the old mad scramble of riding and dissipation and queer fairness. A distinct vision of her Lenox future would shape itself swiftly against the bright background of the present and, before it faded, would communicate a depression, stretching out as it did, a barren eternity of safety and smug domesticity.

On the last night of the show, Williams

issued a general mob-invitation to an impromptu midnight supper at Delmonico's. He was standing just below Irene's box and, poking his head over the rail, he had tossed his convivial message carelessly at the Dillon guests. The project was hailed with joy. Irene gave her husband a swift inquiring glance; he ignored it.

Williams still bore Dillon no grudge for his unbroken silence of the past two nights.

"How about it, Tom?" he called out. "You and Irene'll join us?"

"Oh, you're including *me*?" Dillon came back with another question.

Williams laughed good-naturedly. "Why, I'm hoping you'll be the life of the party, Tom."

"Thanks—but it's out of the question," Dillon told him. "If my wife wants to, she can go. She can go to the devil, if she wants to."

The ludicrous boorishness of this struck even Dillon; he managed to bring out a faintly propitiatory laugh.

Irene, bending over the rail, smiled brightly at Williams.

"You're a dear, George," she said. "Of course I'll go."

It was late when she got back to the hotel, but she went at once to Dillon's room.

"I'm sorry to disturb you," she announced, switching on the light beside his bed. "I have something to tell you."

He threw a hand over his dazzled eyes.

"Put that out, for God's sake!" he ordered impatiently.

"All right, Tom." She obeyed him.

In the darkness, she stood over him and remarked, "I've asked them all to our show in January."

Dillon sprang up with an inarticulate bellow of rage. Thrusting her out of his way, he turned on the light. His eyes, peering at her, were bloodshot; with his massive chest and the taut, strained cords of his throat, he frightened her for a brief, dizzying moment.

Then Irene felt the resurgent tide of

her courage. She put up her head defiantly.

"You didn't keep to your bargain, Tom," she said. "You've been damned nasty. I had a perfect right to ask *anybody*, after the way you acted. Your men friends can come to our show; and if their silly wives don't like my kind, they can stay at home." Her voice had a challenging firmness.

Dillon's rage still choked off his utterance. With brutal force he pushed her away from him.

Irene grasped the night-table for support.

"There's no need of a row!" she cried. "You've behaved like a liar—that's all. I was justified. You can't be honest, you know, even when you want to, Tom. You've got some scheme in your head now—some plan to get the better of me. I've been watching you; I can tell."

They stood confronted during a long moment of silence. Then Dillon shook himself out of his apoplectic daze. His wrath had dropped abruptly, as if her words had of a sudden cooled the turbulent racing of his blood to an equable beat. He gave her a slow, ugly smile. Then, shrugging her aside contemptuously, he threw himself onto the bed.

"You're doing your best to make a damned fool of me," he mused aloud. "Just keep it up, Irene. We'll see who does the crawling."

"I'll risk it," she told him calmly.

His only reply was a rumbling chuckle.

"Put that light out and go to bed," he commanded peremptorily at length. "I'm tired."

CHAPTER VIII

DURING the next six weeks, Dillon spent a good part of the time in New York. When he returned to the Lenox farm he made a point of treating Irene with good-natured tolerance; but there was always a slow, ironic amusement in his attitude, an ill-concealed hint of imminent triumph.

"There's no point in my asking you

what's up," Irene commented once, after he had returned from a mysterious excursion to town. "You wouldn't tell me the truth. I wonder if you're planning to stop our show at the last minute."

"No indeed!" His face was inscrutable. "I'm perfectly willing to give you your show, Irene—"

"Haven't I kept my word like a real sport?" he asked her genially on the January day that brought their guests to them, sweeping them on a snowy gale out of the jingling sleighs and into the warm fire-light of the great hall.

"Yes, you have," Irene acknowledged frankly. "Still—" She looked up into his guarded eyes and shook her head in perplexity.

The private show proved an uproarious success. To the accompaniment of a fierce driving blizzard that turned the Lenox landscape into a swirling blur beyond the windows, the gaiety went its clamorous way. Half a dozen of Dillon's friends turned up with their strings of horses—but without their estimable wives. The professional crowd could boast a full quota in its attendance. A string orchestra held sway in the afternoons in the gallery of the tan-bark ring; tucked away behind clumps of greenery in the drawing-room, they continued their tireless strumming of an evening. Both in the ring and at the house, servants were constantly throwing gigantic logs on the blazing hearths. The prizes, set out on a table in the lounge outside the ring, made as dazzling an array as the gifts at a fashionable wedding. The professional gang rode indiscriminately the Dillon, Moore, Remson and Thompson animals and trooped back to the house in absolute possession of armfuls of silver. Irene, the cordial hostess, gave over her own horses to the guests, keeping only the adored Cawdor for herself.

As to the extravagance of Dillon's hospitality there could be no doubt. The wine-cellar yielded up its most precious freight. The dinners had all the heavy profusion any old English

squire of tradition could demand; the long table, crowded with tankards and huge dishes whereon reposed headless turkeys and partridges, possessed the informal opulence of some hearty, rollicking by-gone epoch. Till far into the night the trays of glasses circulated and the gambling ran a climacteric course. George Williams, still under the spell of his riotous good luck, won prodigious sums.

Irene and Williams were always together. They strolled about arm in arm; they shared each other's childish zest in the merrymaking; they found themselves soldered together in the old warm comradeship. In Irene there was stirring a queer maternal solicitude for this weary, shambling, drunkenly muddled scapegoat. When he lost his precarious balance on the stairs and came crashing down into the hall, it was Irene who helped him up and thrust his cigar back into his mouth. She watched keenly the stages of his befuddlement each night; and, if his shambling gait to his bedroom had too ominous a lurch from left to right, she sent a footman after him.

"He may get as far as the bed," she would muse with perfect seriousness, "but he won't have the strength to take his clothes off."

She took Williams candidly into her confidence.

"I'm grateful to Tom, in a way," she told him. "He's done his level best; but the trouble with him is, he's so *darned* dishonest."

Dillon and his particular friends had from the start adopted an air of cynical, shrugging tolerance toward the festivities; they might have been a group of men-about-town who had slipped away from their own set to look in briefly on a gathering of the obscurer, gayer world. In the ring they watched the activities for a time, then, gravitating together, sauntered away in a body; it would be hours before they showed up again. At dinner, they bantered one another over the lead of the others. Later, they would shut themselves into the billiard-room till bed-time.

"I really don't mind that," Irene remarked to Williams. "If that is Tom's way of being decent, all right."

"He certainly can't *disapprove*," Williams vouchsafed. "He's been in on much worse parties than this."

Irene nodded.

"But you never can tell about a man like Tom after he marries," she murmured. "Some people, the minute they get a wife, think they've moved into a brand-new world." She paused. "That doesn't worry me, George. You see, I'm afraid Tom and the others are getting their heads together."

Her voice rose to a defiant note as she reiterated the cause of her baffled anxiety: "The trouble is, he's *so* damned dishonest."

At last, in a blaze of wintry sunshine on the white dazzle of the snow, the guests were herded into the sleighs and the great piles of luggage tumbled into the station-wagons. The jingle of bells could still be heard in the icy clearness of the air long after the traps had disappeared around a bend of the drive. A faint shout floated to Irene and Dillon in the door-way.

She sighed.

"Well, I'm sorry it's over," she confessed.

"Come inside, Irene," Dillon said. "You'll catch your death of cold out here." His voice held a sharp authority. "Now we've got this party out the way, we'll have to settle down and come to a definite understanding."

She walked past him into the house and he slammed the great door.

CHAPTER IX

A DEFINITE understanding! The next morning Irene was to learn the stark facts from Dillon himself. He had waited for the moment when his plans should be complete; for all his arrogance, he had not dared to put the truth before her until compromise was out of the question. Throughout his weeks of furtive plotting he had vaguely realized the injustice of it all; he had seen that there could be no pos-

sible chance of tricking out his scheme to even a specious show of righteousness. Irene's opposition would have been inflexible; by no sophistical reasoning could he have cajoled her into viewing the matter with resignation. So he had resorted to cowardice. He had laid his mines secretly; but he possessed enough bullying strength to tell her what he had done after the train was lighted and the catastrophe unavoidable. And—the grim irony of it!—he could call it a definite understanding.

Irene had been waiting for the disclosure. She had not known what it would be. She had thought herself fortified; but, for the first time in her life, she had found herself crushed, beaten, utterly helpless.

"You might as well know." His narrowed eyes, shifting from her face to the carpet at his feet, had a mingled look of surly craft and guilt. Bundled into a big fur coat, he had come to take leave of her; a sleigh was waiting at the door to drive him to the station. "I'm selling every damned horse in the stables at public auction next week. I'm tired and sick of them."

Now he'd got the words out, he was able to meet her gaze, was even able to achieve an expression of injured dignity.

The mechanism of Irene's brain had come to a swift stop. She was aware only of an intolerable stillness. She shut her eyes tight. Then in an instant she felt the blood beating in her brain; her mind had resumed its functioning at a crazy, dizzying speed.

She opened her eyes. She was standing in the middle of her bedroom. Dillon had gone. With a terrified cry she ran out into the hall and down the stairs.

"Tom! Tom!" Her voice had a strident, imploring note.

Then she saw the sleigh flash swiftly past a window.

She sank down and, with her throbbing forehead pressed against the cold wood of the stair-post, burst into hysterical sobs.

"He's a liar—a liar!" she repeated

again and again in her futile wrath.

All at once there came to her, distinctly and startlingly loud in the quiet house, Dillon's gruff challenge of weeks ago, "We'll see who does the crawling."

"I won't!" Irene sprang to her feet.

As if Dillon stood beside her now, she lifted her head defiantly and choked back her sobs.

"I won't!" she reiterated aloud.

She walked with a brave firmness up the stairs and into her own room. Then she threw herself on the bed and surrendered again to her passionate grief and her indomitable, blind anger.

The next four days were an agony of hopeless, baffled protest and indecision. It was with something like relief that Irene clung to the one inexorable truth in all the bewildering maze; the horses were to be sold; the auction could not be prevented now. The newspapers jubilantly flaunted the tidings. "Tuesday night—at eight—at Durland's." The black lettering gave the last mark of dread finality to the event.

And then—Dillon would be coming back to her. She knew just how he would act. He would treat her sympathetically, indulgently. He might even confess to a regret that the thing had to be; but every glance and genial caress would force home his conviction that he had acted *for* her, that he had guided her where she could not guide herself. Irene had the vision of his return always before her eyes. She would cry out vehemently, projecting herself forward into the imminent scene, giving him her unswerving defiance and her implacable resentment. But what profit could there be in it all? There lay her unsleeping fear. He had taken everything away from her; she had nothing left. She might parade her anger before him eternally; it would not bring her any comfort. He had lied to her, broken down her defenses and beaten her; in achieving his dishonorable triumph, he had made himself the one brute force in her life.

The horses would be sold and Dillon would come back to her! She was without a weapon of any sort.

A weariness crept over Irene. Now at least, after all her courage and her fine show of independence, she was beginning to feel the crushing weight of Dillon's power. Her resistance, despite her ever-recurrent bursts of bravado, was weakening. She had never known persistent discouragement before; she was unable to cope with it. Her mood was deadening inevitably to that of resentful resignation.

On Monday morning the gallant cavalcade from the stables set out for the train. Irene stood at the door of the tan-bark ring and looked on at the intolerable pageant. The horses capered about irritably, capriciously; the stinging cold had communicated a goad to their feverish blood. Grooms were shouting excited commands; the animals shook their fiery heads and stamped with petulant protest against the hard, ringing ground. Cawdor shied viciously away from his attendant and backed at a mad dance into a group of other horses that had just been let out of the stable. At once, everything was stampeding confusion. Shipley the trainer hurled himself into the fracas and narrowly escaped a kick in the head. Men were being jerked this way and that at the furious will of the beasts. A scared stable-boy took to his heels. Then Irene rushed forward and, shrugging aside Shipley's protest, grasped Cawdor's rein. For an exciting moment she fought with him and pleaded eagerly with him. At length he quieted to her appeal; but his eyes still flashed rebellion and his whinny had an exasperated trumpet-note. Irene laughed up at him.

"*You'd* never give into injustice, my dear," she told him, as if in wistful apology for her own pitiful shortcomings.

"Now, now!" she scolded him humorously for his pettish pawing at the earth.

Coaxing and stroking him, she soon had smoothed out his ruffled temper. Then she put a hand to his mane and, drawing his head down, laid her cheek tenderly against his twitching muzzle.

"I'll *never* give you up!" she cried of a sudden.

The words startled her; she had not been fully conscious of what she said until the passionate pledge was out.

In another moment the brilliant procession had begun its clattering exit from the enclosure. The sun glanced on the polished flanks of the blanketed animals. The haughty heads stood out proudly against the keen sky. And these vicious, arrogant, warrior-like creatures were taking the straight road to the humiliation of a public auction!

Irene watched them out of sight. Her eyes were flashing now with a bright, dauntless anger. The departure of her horses had acted like a martial clarion-call to her spirits. The blood that had seemed coagulated oppressively around her heart had been set free. She drew her shoulders together with a swift excitement and tossed her head. All at once she had ceased to think of her husband as the one relentless factor in her life. Her heart raced at a gallop; a resolve had sprung up buoyantly to meet her need.

She ran back to the house.

"When is that train leaving?" she asked the butler.

"In just an hour, Madame."

"I'm catching it. Have a sleigh here," she ordered as she started up the stairs. Perceiving the look of amazement on the man's face, she burst into a gay, exuberant laugh.

At ten o'clock that evening Irene was perched on an arm of the divan in the drawing-room of Williams' New York apartment. With a friendly hand on the man's shoulder, she leaned close to him while he lit her cigarette.

"But what the *hell*, Irene?" He showed himself at a loss.

"I want all the ready cash you can spare, George." She elucidated the reason of her hasty visit. "And I want you to come with me to Durland's tomorrow evening."

CHAPTER X

THE Dillon auction brought out a picturesque throng. All the ragtag

element, the camp-followers of the horse-show world, were there for the sheer excitement of the thing. Dillon's friends, pompously conscious of themselves as the notables of the gathering, arrived with their overfed, over-dressed wives; they made a brief parade of their important persons and then took inconspicuous seats on the platform; this retirement from the public gaze was not prompted by modesty—rather by a shrewd knowledge of their own worth. It really didn't pay, in a fashionable auction, for the potentates who were planning to buy to occupy front-row places. An auctioneer, with an eye to commissions, could make capital of another man's vain splurging. Dillon's friends were giving over the bidding into the hands of accredited agents—quiet, unassuming fellows who knew how to run out a bargain and who could interpret signals from behind their employers' programs without drawing the attention of others to the mute exchange.

It was a conglomerate crew—no doubt of that—in the Durland ring that night. A throng of the vulgar rich, a scattering of the really fashionable, a dun collection of agents, a bright group of half-world beauties with sleek Jewish escorts, a swaggering delegation of professionals, a supercilious jockey or two from the racing world, and, standing below the platform, a crowd of the riffraff! Up in the gallery an orchestra struggled for a hearing in the babble and din of arrivals.

Irene and Williams had slipped in quietly. One of the pretty showgirls had nudged her semitic companion and whispered rapturously, "That's Mrs. Dillon in the riding-habit; she's just as sweet as her pictures." Otherwise their entrance had gone unheeded. They sat near the back of the platform and smoked cigarettes. Irene showed her towering excitement only by an occasional tense whisper and a frequent quick drawing together of her shoulders.

"Tom's not here," she murmured

once with a sigh of relief. "Thank God for that, anyhow."

The first three-quarters of an hour proved uneventful. The horses knocked down respectable prices; they were the less noteworthy of the Dillon string and their names and performances elicited only a casual interest. The bidding went on, a polite, rather listless dumb-show for the most part. Sometimes an agent would draw out a bored initial offer; then the bartering would continue by signs to its honorable conclusion.

Suddenly the orchestra swung into a gay rhythm of a Strauss waltz; at once, people had begun to crane eager necks. Shipley was on a horse's back and, with a sly smile of satisfaction, had started the animal around the ring.

Cawdor! That one word had converted the occasion from the glum dignity of obsequies to a triumphant lark. Cawdor, the most spectacular, glamorous name in the Dillon roll-call. It was as if a bright light had been flashed into the dim recesses of the spectators' memories; people found themselves looking back into the past, living over again with the proud horse all his glorious victories of three crowded years. A surge of excitement swept over the gallery; in a moment, a deafening applause had broken loose, drowning the suave measures of the music in a clamor of handclapping and a sharp, staccato rapping of walking-sticks.

Cawdor, mincing exquisitely to the rhythm of the waltz, had kept one quivering ear cocked for the welcome of the human herd. When the clatter of recognition struck on his sensitive brain, he braced himself on his taut fore-legs and sent his hind-hoofs with mischievous gaiety into the air. Then he tossed his head high in response to the laughter of the gallery, snorted disdainfully and, with his front knees hugging his sleek breast in turn, swept around and around the ring in a shower of tan-bark. The performance had an aristocratic hauteur about it; the privilege of housing this animal in one's

stable must come high. He had made the circuit of the place a dozen times before the auctioneer could bring himself to stop the triumphal progress. When Shipley at last reined the vain beast in, its sides were flecked with foam. It flashed a superb glance at its prospective buyers, coughed and blew the spume from its nostrils.

Irene had lost her head utterly. She had clapped and stamped out her frenzied joy till she was well-nigh breathless. When she realized that the auctioneer was calling for bids, she jumped to her feet, saluted the man quaintly and called out on a clear high note, "Five thousand dollars—five thousand!" She had no realization of the amused flurry her abrupt appearance on the scene had created.

That the Dillon auction was in the nature of drastic discipline no one had ever doubted. It was of course the irate husband's way of removing from a too reckless wife the means of playing with fire. It meant trouble and domestic friction; but somehow Dillon had always been such a power it had never occurred to people that his intolerant decree might foment rebellion. Irene, it was taken for granted, would be crying her heart out in Lenox while the sale went on. It was a decided shock to see her suddenly and joyfully spring into sight. The temerity of it evoked whispered amazement and a subdued commendation. After all it was rather admirable.

"Oh—damn!" Charles Remson muttered and bit a corner of his program impatiently. "What's *she* doing here—in the name of all that's holy?"

He had already notified Dillon of his intention to buy Cawdor. Moreover, he had meant the horse to be a peace-offering for his wife; she had caught on to a recent irregularity of his and was raising a fearful row. He glowered at his agent and nodded encouragement.

Irene, her shoulders thrown back with determination, carried the bids up by thousands. Her abounding enthusiasm communicated itself to the agent and he shouted his offers back at her.

"Ten thousand!" she cried at last, sweeping the amount up two thousand dollars. "Ten thousand!"

She glanced at the eager crowd and laughed jubilantly.

At that, Remson, unable to keep out of the fray any longer, sprang from his seat.

"Twelve thousand!" he yelled with impulsive wrath.

"Fourteen!" she came back. "Fourteen thousand, Charlie!"

This was greeted with chortling delight by the gallery.

"Oh, hell!" Remson protested. "You can have the horse and welcome." He flung himself back into his seat.

The hammer banged down; the victory was Irene's.

Still under the heady spell of her excitement, she squeezed Williams' arm joyfully, then, pushing her way to the edge of the platform, ran down the steps. Without really knowing what happened, she let Shipley help her into the ring. And all at once she was looking up into Cawdor's blazing, jealous eyes! The next moment she had put her boot in the trainer's offered palm and felt herself being swung into the saddle.

The gallery, indulgently applaudive, stirred her enthusiasm. She signaled her gay gratitude. Cawdor, his right ear pricked to her murmured encouragement, leaped forward under her. She sent him ahead at a tearing gallop.

"He's mine—mine!" she exulted, her silent chant of possession timed to the thudding hoof-beats.

Suddenly, with a stifled exclamation, she tugged the horse back to an abrupt standstill. Dillon was leaning over the rail at her side. His face, darkly flushed, with the veins on his forehead purple and distended, showed his blind rage. He caught at the reins and jerked her over to the fence.

"Get down off that horse," he commanded. "Come here to me, Irene."

He beckoned Shipley over to him. The trainer darted to Cawdor's head and Irene, slipping from the saddle, was lifted bodily out of the ring and

found herself standing face to face with Dillon.

He tossed a combative glance at the humming, buzzing crowd.

"We'd better not row here," he told her.

Grasping her arm, he led her out into a deserted ante-room.

"Now then!" He pushed her away from him. "What are you doing here?"

Irene was coolly hostile. "I came from Lenox yesterday—to buy Cawdor, Tom."

"You've made a *laughing-stock* of me," he burst out, "a joke before all my friends. And after all I've done for you!" He was shouting his generosity at her like an extravagant bill that demanded payment. "I bought you, in the first place, for a good deal more than you were worth, remember. I've given you everything you wanted since—everything!" His voice rose harshly as he summed up his compelling grievance. "What in hell were you, anyhow, before I married you?"

Irene showed herself unimpressed by his vindictive rhetoric.

"I had to buy Cawdor," she caught him up. "That's all."

"And you've made a vulgar show of the whole business." Her disobedience had dealt his pride a smarting hurt; but, though he might be the butt of the crowd's ridicule, he could still assert his scornful mastery of her.

"Now you've got to be taught your lesson," he told her hotly. "You've got to be shown what common decency is."

Irene refused to flinch at the threat.

"You'd better be careful, Tom." Her voice was firm and defiant. "You won't get anywhere by bullying me."

He fell into a moody, musing silence for a moment. Then,

"So you bid the horse in," he said, his tone ominously gentle now.

"I did." She gave him a calm level glance.

Dillon laughed at her contemptuously.

"See here, Irene," he put it up to her,

"what are you going to do with it?"

Without waiting for a reply he came a step nearer. His eyes had a fierce hot gleam in them.

"He'll never go back to Lenox," he confronted her. "He'll never be put into a stable of mine."

He was done with arguing; it was for him at present to press his authority.

Irene bit her lips and a swift rush of discouragement betrayed itself in an uneven intake of breath. The utter hopelessness of the struggle had struck her; all her blood seemed to turn sluggish around her heart. On the instant she had forgotten where she was. This was the moment she had dreaded; the ineffectual, exasperating scene she had associated with Dillon's return to Lenox. They stood there, implacably confronted. Any understanding, any chance of a compromise was out of the question. They had stepped together into the intolerable future. Irene's whirling excitement of the past two days had buoyed her up and narrowed her horizon. She had seen no further than her triumphant act of rebellion. Now it was as if a fog had lifted. She and Dillon faced each other, alone in a dreary universe.

Then, all at once the subdued rumor of the ring reached her, and in a flash Irene, recapturing the present with a sweeping joy, realized that she could never go back to Dillon. Her revolt had not been, after all, a random, futile thing; it had been an escape into a new freedom, not a defiance for a day. Though she had not known yesterday that she was effecting a complete severance, she knew it now. That brief vision of the Lenox future, pressing upon her with a weight that seemed palpable, had given her all the fierce strength she needed. The marriage to Dillon had been a grotesque mistake; nothing could drive her under the yoke again.

She raised her head with a proud independence.

"It's no use, Tom!" she cried. "I'm going to do just as I please now."

Cawdor belongs to me—not to you. You can't dictate your terms any longer."

"You're a fool!" he told her furiously. "You happen to belong to *me*, as a matter of fact. You've bought the horse with my money and you intend to keep him on my property." He turned away from her and started for the door. "He goes back into the sale now; and you'll return to Lenox—with me—in the morning."

He tossed his ultimatum over his shoulder at her.

Irene sprang after him.

"Wait a minute." She seized his arm. "I don't intend to ship Cawdor to Lenox. He'll stay here in New York—with me."

"What do you mean?" Dillon wheeled around on her savagely.

"That I'm not going back with you!" she flashed out. "You've taught me my lesson with a vengeance, Tom. We're quits; and we'll *stay* quits."

He twitched his coat-sleeve away from her.

"You may just as well stop talking rot." He brought the words out in a measured, hammering monotone. "I still own the horse—and I still own you." In his arrogant conviction of proprietorship he let her see his brutal scorn. "I mean to get rid of one and keep the other, that's all. I've had enough of your damned nonsense. You're through with horses; you'll give your time to your child and me."

Irene's nostrils quivered, as if she were filling them with the first breath of free air.

"It's you I'm through with!" she exclaimed. "Can't you see that, if it's a question of you or Cawdor, you haven't got a *chance* in the world? And you can't put the horse back in the sale, Tom. George Williams' money bought him—not yours." She looked fearlessly into his face. "I don't care a rap for money or protection or what you'd call decency. All I'm after is fair treatment and George will give me that." Her voice mounted to a clear ringing note of joy. "I am going back to him tonight!"

S. Set—Mar.—3

Only her bright, proud disdain saved her, during a tense instant, from physical violence. Dillon had blundered forward furiously, blindly, his flush darkening and mottling to a purple that here and there showed a patch of turgid black. Then her face had swum clear of the reeling confusion. Dillon peered at her with his narrowed, ugly eyes; and instantly he knew that he had lost her. His brute force was impotent, heavily helpless before her inflexible bravery. In her keen, unflinching antagonism there was a quality of absolute finality that struck in even on his choleric daze and forced home its proof of the immeasurable distance between them.

Dillon, desperately striving to reach her by a last outburst of insolence or by a frenzied plea for an understanding parley—he had no idea what his strangled utterance might have been—found himself choked, unable to speak one of the passionate words.

"No, it's not any use," Irene said. "I'm going back to him tonight."

She walked firmly past Dillon and was gone.

Emerging on the gay confusion of the ring, she beckoned Williams to her.

"Let's go now," she whispered, slipping a hand into the crook of his arm. "We've got something to *celebrate*, my dear!"

CHAPTER XI

MRS. CHARLIE REMSON in her box at the Newport show was being ponderously didactic. "A woman who is worthless can't stand respectability, even with millions to back it up. You know the old saying about the sow's ear— And, though she's up to her neck in debt, she's still refusing to sell her horse to my husband. Sheer bravado, of course."

"She shows the strain." The woman beside Mrs. Remson leveled a haughty lorgnette at the ring. "She must be tired, by this time, of nursing George Williams through delirium tremens."

"And there *are* people who blame Tom for getting the divorce himself!"

Mrs. Remson emitted an indignant snort, then veered abruptly to the sentimental vein. "Tom deserves all the sympathy we can give him. And that *darling* child—simply his whole life, my dear. Poor motherless little thing—" She sighed. "Charlie and I have just sent it a packing-case full of toys for its birthday. I can scarcely realize it—two years old. It seems only yesterday—"

They shook sad heads at the relentless flight of time.

"She is an inexplicable woman." Mrs. Remson confessed herself at a loss. "Why doesn't she marry the Williams creature? Even if she *has* lived with him for years, the decent thing would be to legalize matters. For the sake of Tom's child, at least—"

They relapsed into musing silence.

"Such an uninteresting show!" Mrs. Remson looked wearily into the ring.

"And such a poor attendance!" Her companion gave a bored glance at the gallery.

It was the signal for departure. They got heavily to their feet.

"Horse shows aren't what they used to be," Mrs. Remson commented with a melancholy smile. "Scattering the Dillon stables was a death-blow, Charlie says. It started so many others selling."

Her friend joined in the mournful strain. "Yes—and automobiles—"

"Of course—automobiles," came the hollow echo from Mrs. Remson.

It was getting dark. A gust of evening breeze, with a September sharpness in it, swept over the Cashio. The last class had been judged. The bugler was sounding taps over the grave of another Newport season. Irene stood at Cawdor's head and played with the championship ribbon he was proudly

flaunting. Her smile had an undimmed radiance; the woman in the Remson box had stretched her imagination to the cracking-point in her effort to glimpse a hint of unhappiness. Irene still had the unblemished porcelain-like surface of former years. At this moment her thoughts were on another Newport show. She was recalling the day on which Dillon had first permitted himself a display of mastery over her. She liked to glance back over her shoulder into her life with Dillon. The oppressive shadow of those years intensified the brightness of the easy-going, harum-scarum, adventurous present.

Yes—Tom had taught her her lesson. He had proved to her that only as a frank freebooter could she keep fast hold of happiness.

Williams ambled up to her and together they caressed the capricious horse.

"I have an idea I'm going to win a lot with the prize-money tonight, Irene." He laughed and a strong whiff of Scotch whiskey mingled with the pungent reek of the horse.

Irene patted the man sympathetically on his protruding shoulder-blades.

He grinned and put a lean arm around her waist.

"We've got to get out of town somehow, you know," he reminded her. "And we've got to keep Cawdor away from the duns."

Irene laughed up at him gaily.

"Oh, it's a great life, George!" she exclaimed.

She tossed her head in dauntless defiance of Fate and drew her slight shoulders together swiftly.

"You'll win!" she assured him. "We'll *always* get by somehow. I'm not afraid."



Death Mates

By Anita Loos

I

IT has always been my boast that I have kept a respectable house. It's hard enough to do, as any landlady in Philadelphia can tell you, but my lodgers have always been just the same to me as members of my own family. I've always watched their comings and goings and seen to it that they kept out of mischief just the same as though they were my own children. I seldom have anyone for very long, which, of course, is because it is a transient neighborhood. That's the reason why I have to be so careful. But when the one lodger I could have banked on, a woman I have known intimately for fifteen years, who has been everything that a good Christian ought to be, suddenly becomes a hussy overnight, spends her savings on immodest, colored undergarments, and dies under the most awful circumstances, causing my house to be investigated, I simply give up. I'm through with trying to understand human nature.

Ella Craigen first came to me fifteen years ago—and she wasn't an entire stranger then. She was an old friend of Cousin Abbie's, who sent her to me because she was a stranger in Philadelphia and wanted a quiet, respectable place to live.

I saw at once that she was a good girl. Her eyes weren't exactly crossed, but they had a sort of cast in them. She was very thin and pale. She had a sharp nose, very light blue eyes and thin lips, and was not given much to talk. She had a position teaching—which she held

with honor up to the end. That shows what the Board of Education thought about her!

As I say—she was everything that a good girl ought to be, all those years until the end! There was only one thing about her that might have given me a clue. She did have beautiful hair. It was long and golden and very thick—although I will say that she never made a boast of it and always wore it straight back in a very modest, unbecoming bun. I suppose if I had been a professor of psychology that hair might have given me a clue.

When I think of her as she was all those years! I thought—in fact, we all thought—that she was the most modest creature in the world. The men all used to notice it. I never knew she spoke to a man for over a minute in all her life. She always pretended to have the greatest contempt for them, and although she was so modest and all, I think she could have held her own against any of them. She had that sort of constant, righteous indignation that God gives good women for their defense in this world.

Not only was she self-respecting and quiet, but she had a very bad case of heart trouble that made her all the more retiring. She had to be very careful to keep from excitement of any kind and always took two minutes to climb the stairs. She used to do it with her watch in her hand.

After she had been with me about two years, we became quite friendly. She took the *Nautilus* and I took the *Ladies' Home Journal*, and she used

to come downstairs two or three times a week and read aloud while I did my mending. She was great on improving the mind, and never did anything without making sure it would benefit her.

She used to read the *Ladies' Home Journal* from cover to cover to me, but always skipped the radical parts about sex and hygiene and such things. I'm just telling this to show how she fooled me for fifteen years.

She never had a male caller, and very few women. There were other teachers who used to call once in a while when she was sick. About the only mail she got was a few motto post cards at holiday times. She had these mottoes hung all over her room. She was very advanced on New Thought lines.

The first time I ever knew her to take any interest in men, whatsoever, was after the war started and then, of course, we were all trying to help the soldier boys, so I didn't think anything of it. She used to sit in her room night after night till sometimes one and two o'clock making New Thought scrapbooks for the wounded boys. She would get all worked up making them—she was terribly patriotic. I used to go up and try to make her go to bed. Her cheeks used to blaze and her eyes sparkle, and I knew it was bad for her heart.

But she wouldn't listen to me. She used to say, "What is this in comparison with what those brave boys are doing over there?"

She really became half daft about the war. She had a map in her room and followed up every day with colored pins.

When the wounded boys started coming back, she got worse. She used to turn out New Thought scrapbooks at the rate of two a week. It took a great deal of her money, too.

When the restrictions began she did more than her duty. She wouldn't touch sugar or meat and she got along with scarcely any heat or

light. But in spite of everything, her health seemed to be improving—she had color all the time—and life. She was all stirred up.

Then an incident happened—it was about the light restrictions. It always took her about twenty minutes to comb her hair in the morning, as she was very neat about keeping it clean and healthy. When the light restriction went on she wouldn't turn on the electricity in the morning, and her room being so little and dark with only one window, she had to stand right in the window to get enough light to see at all.

Right across the street is a big hotel—the Touraine. One morning as she was combing her hair at the window, she looked across and saw the boldest, foreign looking man sitting in the window—in his night shirt—glaring right at her.

She was terribly mad (or so at least she told me), and she motioned him to get away, but he only grinned and went right on. She tried to draw the Swiss curtain, but then she couldn't see to put on her hair tonic—so she had to go and put on her waist and collar and comb her hair that way with him leering over at her all the time. She came downstairs and told me that it was disgraceful that this grinning foreign monkey could spend his time like this when our boys were fighting and dying over there. She never had much use for foreigners—and I think this was the first time she had ever been insulted by a man. She *seemed* terribly upset—and I believed her!

She worked longer than ever on her New Thought books that night.

The next morning when she came downstairs she was almost pretty, she was so lit up and excited. In the first place this foreign monkey had been at the window and behaved exactly like he did the morning before. That made her mad. But what made her excited was that they had 'phoned from the hospital that she could come down and help entertain the wounded

boys. She had made application months before. She had three of her New Thought scrapbooks under her arms, and was going down straight from school to read out of them to the boys.

I told her to be careful of her heart—but she said the doctor told her that it was lots better. She had never felt so well in her life. And she sailed off.

I could hardly wait for her to come in at dinner time. I heard several go upstairs—but no one went slow enough to be her. It got to be eight o'clock. Finally I heard young Mr. Rance come in. He went to the hospital often to see one of his friends, so I went out into the hall and asked him if he'd been there. He had, so I asked him did he see Miss Craigen. He said yes, and told me what happened.

It seems the boys weren't advanced enough to appreciate her New Thought books, and there were some variety girl singers down there—all painted up and singing ragtime songs—so they didn't pay any attention to her at all.

I rushed upstairs and listened at her door. Sure enough—she was in there—crying. She felt she couldn't face me and had run upstairs so I wouldn't know she had come in. I didn't know what to say, so I just tiptoed back again.

The next morning when she came down she didn't say a word about what had happened. But she didn't look like she had for the last few months. She was pale and tired looking. But she was terribly indignant. The foreigner was still at the window in the Touraine. I think she was a little bit glad to have this to talk about, as it covered up the other, and how the boys didn't appreciate the New Thought. She went on quite a tirade about men, about how common their tastes were, and this one in particular, and said she'd show him his place if it was the last thing she did.

That night, without a word, she

came downstairs with her magazine and we had our evening just as though the war had never broken in. There was no talk of scrapbooks, and I noticed she tried to skip everything in the magazine about soldiers. That was our last night! When she went to go upstairs she told me that she was not going to endure the foreigner another day. She had done the best she knew how to help men and they didn't seem to appreciate it, and she wasn't going to let one of them make her life miserable.

She went out earlier than usual the next morning, and I watched out of the front window to see what she did. Sure enough—she went into the Touraine. She stayed there about fifteen minutes and when she came out her face was set and white. She went around the corner and I lost sight of her.

She came in at the usual time that night—went upstairs as usual, taking two minutes. I could hardly wait to get up to her room and find out what she had done to that foreigner—but when I got there she didn't seem to want to talk. She was putting something away in the bureau drawer. (I found out later what it was, the sly thing!) She said she wanted to be quiet and go to bed, so I left her.

Then came the morning! What a morning. Never again will I believe in *anybody*.

She did not come down at her usual time. It got later and later and I began to be worried. Finally I went upstairs and knocked. There was no answer. I knocked again. No answer. I opened the door with my pass-key and walked in. There she sat—at the window. Her hair was down—it did look beautiful. But she was clothed in the most brazen pink-colored undergarment. From the waist up she might as well have had nothing on at all. Her face was smeared with rouge! I stood rooted to the spot. Finally I got my breath and said, "Ella Craigen!" She didn't answer.

I went over to her. I shook her. Her shoulder felt like ice. She was dead! Her heart at last! But on the threshold of death she *had got herself up regardless in order to attract that foreigner across the street!* And she had pretended all the time to hate him—she had gone over to the hotel on the pretense of complaining about him—and probably all the time it was only to see him closer. I was simply stunned but I did have sense enough to cover up her naked body and put her on the bed before I called for help.

We sent across to the Touraine for Dr. Gregory. Before he got here I had rubbed the paint off her face and had her in a decent flannel nightgown.

He was quite interested in the case—it seemed as if he had seen her before—although I didn't think she ever went to him. I told him she died decently in bed—that was a white lie, Heaven knows! He said that it was her heart—that she showed evidences of an emotional struggle of some sort. He could tell that because her nails had dug into the flesh of her palms and her face was all contorted. I knew this was because her better nature had come to and the spirit had probably done its best to fight the flesh before she passed on.

We finally got her buried quietly. But that woman certainly spoiled my belief in human nature. I am through with taking chances.

II

DR. GREGORY dropped into his club that evening after a trying day. He had had two deaths—one of them a heart case, a little old maid school teacher with whom he had had a peculiar experience the day before. The other, Lieutenant Bellini, the famous Italian Ace, who had been confined in his rooms at the Hotel Touraine for several months—a victim of shell shock.

The Italian was an adorable boy—

sweet, warm of nature and childlike. The doctor had learned to love him, as had everyone with whom the lonely, whimsical foreigner had come in contact.

The doctor felt talkative and made his way toward a friend.

"I see that Bellini died," the friend said as he looked up from his newspaper.

The doctor settled himself in the easy chair, lit a cigar and began his story.

"Today," he said, "I saw death take two of the most contrasting natures—with a strange bond between them."

The friend was interested and put down his paper.

"Young Bellini had been in a bad way, nervously, for months," said Dr. Gregory, "when, one morning, I found him almost normal and quiet. Then he told me what brought it about. It seems that there was a woman in a cheap lodging house across the street who had appeared at her window and combed some beautiful yellow hair. Bellini had been terribly homesick, and the sight of that hair brought to his mind a little sweetheart he had had once in Venice. It cheered him so that he spent one whole happy morning—and even in the afternoon when his attacks came back, he kept amused, wondering if the girl would be there the next day. Sure enough she was—and every day after—and Bellini watched her and found calm and contentment. Of course I knew he couldn't pull through—but I was grateful for those few cheerful moments he had.

"Yesterday I was in the parlor of his suite talking with the nurse when someone knocked. It was the owner of the hair come over to complain and say that if the boy's interest in her didn't stop she would report it to the hotel.

"She was a poor, little, faded out school teacher—with this incongruous mop of what one might almost

call voluptuous, golden hair. Puritan—of course, to the finger-tips, and full of righteous indignation. I explained things to her and told her that if she was able to give this poor soldier a little camouflaged thrill, she ought to be happy to do it and mark it down as war work. I described the little Venetian sweetheart sitting in the window in her rose chemise (as Bellini had described her to me), smiling down on him as he lay in bed in the late mornings. I asked her why she couldn't go on combing her beautiful hair and bringing back those happy days to the poor boy. Of course that shocked her — poor soul!"

The doctor smiled reminiscently, and went on:

"I didn't mind shocking her a little bit—perhaps a good shock administered in early life might have made a human being of her. She was far from unattractive, in a way. However, she was a true product of Puritan training and outraged to the very soul. She began to cry and said that men were beasts and that they didn't want good women to lift them to higher things.

"It was useless to argue with her, and I was in a hurry, so I patted her on the shoulder, told her to think things over and see if she could find it in her heart to blame the poor homesick boy who had given his life to his country. She made some curt reply about men in general, Bellini in particular, added a little slam at me, *en passant*, and left with a set, hard expression on her face.

"This morning, early, I was called over to the lodging house and found that the poor soul had passed away. Her heart had been in bad shape for years and she had evidently suffered some shock that brought on the final attack.

"I no sooner got back to the hotel than I was called up to Bellini's room. He had had a bad night but had quieted toward morning. The nurse left him and, hearing no sound from his room, had not entered it until seven-thirty. When she did go in, she found him seated at his window, dead, his eyes staring out across the street, with a serene and beautiful smile on his face. But the most we could have asked for him was granted. He had a peaceful death!"



MEN while they are living have to get out of the way of automobiles and street cars, and when they are dead have to get out of the way of reclamation projects and reservoirs.



TWO stockbrokers discussed the depth of their souls. Two deaf mutes dwelt on the subject of harmony.



The Eternal Pantagruel

By John T. Frederick

FOR a number of years I have been deeply interested in women. If I had been fortunate enough to have been born in Islam I should have distinguished myself in this regard. Cool pavements, shadowy courts, voluptuous perfumes, as the setting for the consummate loveliness of many women! But even in Christendom there are some opportunities. . . . I know the first name of the girl at the cigar counter in my office building. I know which tables at the lunchroom are served by the less unattractive waitress. I still hope to find a really comely stenographer. And the movies! When I visit my uncle in California, I shall go privately to Hollywood and offer my services. Within a month or two, in all probability, in sight of all the audiences in America, I shall kiss Norma Talmadge!

As we issue from the Pastime Theatre I clutch my wife's arm masterfully. "We must catch the next car," I announce. "The furnace fire will be low."

Financial ability has been mine from boyhood. Granted only a little necessary capital, I should start a chicken farm: two thousand hens laying two hundred eggs per hen per year, at fifty cents a dozen; two thousand capons weighing eight pounds each at fifty cents per pound. . . . With the profits I should stock a cattle ranch in northern Wisconsin: ten thousand acres at twenty dollars an acre, grazing five thousand steers which would gain two hundred and fifty pounds each at ten cents per pound. . . . Then I should go into oil,

probably, or corner the world's supply of some rare metal, or find the diamond mines in Arkansas. Presently I should be challenging the Morgans themselves. And meanwhile my palatial residence would be the resort of poets, painters, thinkers; I would be the Lorenzo of America.

The street-car is crowded. The conductor does not ask for our fares. As we descend to the bare street under the corner light, I finger the dime in my pocket.

Most of all I am a man of bloody deeds. I am selecting in a catalogue the high-power rifle with which I shall get my moose—yes, one or two illicit ones, perhaps—in the North woods next winter. That will be training for the part I must play in our next war—probably with Japan. In the event of sudden invasion, by means of airships or via Canada, I shall organize under the spur of necessity a desperate force of two thousand citizens. We shall throw a trench around the town. At this very point the advancing wave of the enemy will be halted. As a result of my services I will be made commander-in-chief. Or perhaps I will command the air squadron that will blow Tokio into smithereens.

As I enter the room, my small son rears his head from the covers and leaps out of bed. "My candy!" he demands. "You get back there!" I yell at him. "Didn't I tell you not to get out on the bare floor? Now you mind me!" I apply my palm fiercely to his thinly-clad rear. He howls.



Répétition Générale

By H. L. Mencken and George Jean Nathan

§ 1

THRENODY.—Where is the graveyard of dead gods? What lingering mourner waters their mounds? There was a day when Jupiter was the king of all the gods, and any man who doubted his puissance was *ipso facto* a barbarian and an ignoramus. But where in all the world is there a man who worships Jupiter today? And what of Huitzilopochtli? In one year—and it was but five hundred years ago—no less than 50,000 youths and maidens were slain in sacrifice to him. Today, if he is remembered at all, it is only by some vagrant savage in the depths of the Mexican forest. Huitzilopochtli, like many other gods, had no human father; his mother was a virtuous widow; he was born of an apparently innocent flirtation that she carried on with the sun. When he frowned, his father, the sun, stood still. When he roared with rage, earthquakes engulfed whole cities. When he thirsted, he was watered with 10,000 gallons of human blood. But today Huitzilopochtli is as magnificently forgotten as Allen G. Thurman. Once the peer of Allah, he is now the peer of General Coxey, Richmond P. Hobson, Nan Patterson, Alton G. Parker, Adelina Patti, General Weyler and Tom Sharkey.

Speaking of Huitzilopochtli recalls his brother, Tezcatlipoca. Tezcatlipoca was almost as powerful: he consumed 25,000 virgins a year. Lead me to his tomb: I would weep, and hang a *couronne des perles*! But who knows where it is? Or where the grave of

Quetzalcoatl is? Or Tlaloc? Or Chalchihuitlicue? Or Xiehtecutli? Or Centeotl, that sweet one? Or Tlazolteotl, the goddess of love? Or Mictlan? Or Ixtlilton? Or Omacatl? Or Yacatecutli? Or Mixcoatl? Or Xipe? Or all the host of Tzitzimitles? Where are their bones? Where is the willow on which they hung their harps? In what forlorn and unheard-of hell do they await the resurrection morn? Who enjoys their residuary estates? Or that of Dis, whom Cæsar found to be the chief god of the Celts? Or that of Tarvos, the bull? Or that of Moccus, the pig? Or that of Epona, the mare? Or that of Mullo, the celestial jackass? There was a time when the Irish revered all these gods as violently as they now hate the English. But today even the drunkest Irishman laughs at them.

But they have company in oblivion: the hell of dead gods is as crowded as the Presbyterian hell for babies. Damona is there, and Esus, and Drunemeton, and Silvana, and Dervones, and Adsalluta, and Deva, and Belisama, and Axona, and Vintios, and Taranucus, and Sulis, and Cocidius, and Adsmerius, and Dumiatia, and Caletos, and Moccus, and Ollovidius, and Albiorix, and Leucitius, and Vitucadrus, and Ogmios, and Uxellimus, and Borvo, and Granos, and Mogons. All mighty gods in their day, worshipped by millions, full of demands and impositions, able to bind and loose—all gods of the first class, not pikers. Men labored for generations to build vast temples to them—temples with stones as large as hay-wagons. The business of interpreting their whims occupied thousands

of priests, wizards, archdeacons, evangelists, haruspices, bishops, archbishops. To doubt them was to die, usually at the stake. Armies took to the field to defend them against infidels: villages were burned, women and children were butchered, cattle were driven off. Yet in the end they all withered and died, and today there is none so poor to do them reverence. Worse, the very tombs in which they lie are lost, and so even a respectful stranger is debarred from paying them the slightest and politest homage.

What has become of Sutekh, once the high god of the whole Nile Valley? What has become of:

Resheph	Baal
Anath	Astarte
Ashtoreth	Hadad
El	Addu
Nergal	Shalem
Nebo	Dagon
Ninib	Sharrab
Melek	Yau
Ahijah	Amon-Re
Isis	Osiris
Ptah	Sebek
Anubis	Molech

All these were once gods of the highest class. Many of them are mentioned with fear and trembling in the Old Testament. They ranked, five or six thousand years ago, with Jahveh himself; the worst of them stood far higher than Thor or Wotan. Yet they have all gone down the chute, and with them the following:

Bilé	Gwydion
Lér	Manawyddan
Arianrod	Nuada Argetlam
Morrigan	Tadg
Govanon	Goibniu
Gundfled	Odin
Sokk-mimi	Llaw Gyffes
Memetona	Lleu
Dagda	Ogma
Kerridwen	Mider
Pwyll	Rigantona
Ogyrvan	Marzin
Dea Dia	Mars
Ceres	Jupiter
Vaticanus	Cunina
Eduia	Potina
Adeona	Statilinus
Iuno Lucina	Diana of Ephesus
Saturn	Rhigus

Furrina	Pluto
Vediovius	Ops
Consus	Meditrina
Cronos	Vesta
Enki	Tilmun
Engurra	Zer-panitu
Belus	Merodach
Dimmer	U-ki
Mu-ul-lil	Dauke
Ubargisi	Gasan-abzu
Ubilulu	Elum
Gasan-lil	U-Tin-dir ki
U-dimmer-an-icia	Marduk
Enurestu	Nin-lil-la
U-sab-sib	Nin
U-Mersi	Persophone
Tammuz	Istar
Venus	Lagas
Bau	U-urugal
Mulu-hursang	Sirtumu
Anu	Ea
Beltis	Nirig
Nusku	Nebo
Ni-zu	Samas
Sahi	Ma-banba-anna
Aa	En-Mersi
Allatu	Amurru
Sin	Assur
Abil-Addu	Aku
Apsu	Beltu
Dagan	Dumu-zi-abzu
Elali	Kuski-banda
Isum	Kaawanu
Mami	Nin-azu
Nin-mah	Lugal-Amarada
Zaraq	Qarradu
Suqamunu	Ura-gala
Zagaga	Ueras

You may think I spoof. That I invent the names. I do not. Ask your pastor to lend you any good treatise on comparative religion: you will find them all listed. They were all gods of the highest standing and dignity—gods of civilized peoples—worshipped and believed in by millions. All were theoretically omnipotent, omniscient and immortal. And all are dead.

§ 2

Deus Nobis Haec Otia Fecit.—The marvel is that the human body lasts so long. Consider the stomach. Think of the things that go into it in the course of a year: grease, staphylococci, bones, sinews, cartilages, caffeine, ethyl alcohol, castor oil, ginger, pepper, mustard, mayonnaise, live oysters, hair, gravel, chicken pin-feathers, sugar, starch,

ptomaines, green apples, seeds, cellulose, sour milk, tobacco juice, paprika, sausage-skins, contaminated water, citric acid, blood, vinegar, garlic, embalming fluid, bad air. Eat mustard, and you eat allyl isothiocyanate (C_3H_5NCS), a violent poison; when applied to the skin it raises huge blisters. Put pepper on your tomatoes, and you assault your mucosa with capsinin ($C_8H_{14}O_2$), a substance that is even more irritating. Take a dose of castor oil to repair the damage, and you reinforce the allyl isothiocyanate and capsinin with ricinoleic acid ($C_{18}H_{34}O_2$), a poison so violent that it is the cause of a definite disease, ricinism, the chief symptoms of which are hemorrhagic gastroenteritis and icterus, *i.e.*, jaundice. Yet the human stomach goes on taking in and disposing of such stuff, year in and year out, sometimes for nearly a century. Of all the wonders of God, certainly it is one of the chiefest. Let us remember it the next time we pray.

§ 3

L'Amour.—It is difficult for even the most skilful actors to keep such a play as Ibsen's "Hedda Gabler" from degenerating into a farce. The reason is not far to seek. It lies in the plain fact that such transactions as Ibsen sets forth—a silly woman's efforts to be heavily romantic, the manoeuvres of a diabetic lover, the cuckolding of a husband wearing whiskers—are intrinsically farcical. All love affairs, in truth, are farcical—that is, to the spectators. Have you ever observed one in real life without grinning? When I hear that some old friend has succumbed to the blandishments of a woman, however virtuous and beautiful, I laugh. When I hear that they are quarrelling, I laugh. When I hear that she is carrying on with the curate of the parish, I laugh. When I hear that her husband, in revenge, is sneaking his stenographer to dinner in an Italian restaurant, I laugh. And so do you. But when you go to the theatre, the dramatist often asks you to wear a solemn frown while

he displays the same nonsense—that is, while he depicts a fat actress as going crazy when she discovers that her husband, an actor with a face like the abdomen of a ten-pin, has run off to Asbury Park, N. J., with another actress who pronounces all French words in the manner of Akron, O.

The best dramatists, of course, make no such mistake. In Shakespeare, love is always depicted as comedy—sometimes light and charming, as in "Twelfth Night," but usually rough and buffoonish, as in "The Taming of the Shrew." This comic attitude is plainly visible even in such plays as "Hamlet" and "Romeo and Juliet." In its main outlines, I suppose, "Hamlet" is properly looked upon as a tragedy, but if you believe that the love passages are intended to be tragic then all I ask is that you give a sober reading to the colloquies between Hamlet and Ophelia. They are not only farcical; they are obscene; Shakespeare, through the mouth of Hamlet, derides the whole business with extravagant ribaldry. As for "Romeo and Juliet," what is it but a penetrating burlesque upon the love guff that was fashionable in the poet's time? True enough, his head buzzed with such loveliness that he could not write even burlesque without making it beautiful—compare "Much Ado About Nothing"—but nevertheless it is quite absurd to say that he was serious when he wrote this tale of calf-love. Imagine such a man taking seriously the love spasms and hallucinations of a cutie of 14, the tin-pot heroics of a boy of 18! Shakespeare remembered very well the nature of his own amorous fancies at 18. It was the year of his seduction by Ann Hathaway, whose brothers later made him marry her, much to his dismay. He wrote the play at 45. Tell it to the Marines!

I have a suspicion that even Ibsen, though he seldom showed much humor, indulged himself in some quiet spoofing when he wrote "A Doll's House," "Hedda Gabler," "The Lady From the Sea" and "Little Eyolf." The whole last act of "Hedda Gabler" could be

converted into burlesque by changing ten words; as I have said, it is almost always burlesque as bad actors play it. In the cases of "Ghosts" and "The Master-Builder" there can be no doubt whatever. The former is a piece of buffoonery designed to make fun of the fools who were outraged by "A Doll's House"; the latter is a comic piece founded upon personal experience. At the age of 60 Ibsen amused himself with a harmless flirtation with a girl of 16. Following the custom of her sex, she took his casual winks and cheek-pinchings quite seriously, and began hinting to the whole neighborhood that the old boy was hopelessly gone on her, and that he intended to divorce Frau Ibsen and run off with her to Italy. All this gave entertainment to Ibsen, who was a sardonic man, and he began speculating as to what would happen to a man of his age who actually yielded to the gross provocations of such a wench. The result was "The Master-Builder." But think of the plot! He makes the master-builder climb a church-steeple, and then jump off! Imagine him regarding such slap-stick farce seriously!

The world has very little sense of humor. It is always wagging its ears solemnly over elaborate jocosities. For 600 years it has slobbered and sweated over the "Divine Comedy" of Dante, despite the plain fact that the work is a flaming satire upon the whole Christian hocus-pocus of heaven, purgatory and hell. To have tackled such nonsense head-on, in Dante's time, would have been to flout the hangman; hence the poet clothed his attack in an irony so delicate that the ecclesiastical police were baffled. Why is the poem called a comedy? I have read at least a dozen discussions of the question by modern pedants, all of them labored and unconvincing. The same problem obviously engaged the scholars of the poet's own time. He called the thing simply "comedy"; they added the adjective "divine" in order to ameliorate what seemed to them to be an intolerable ribaldry. Well, here is a "comedy" in

which human beings are torn limb from limb, boiled in sulphur, cut up with red-hot knives, and filled with molten lead! Can one imagine a man capable of such a poem regarding such fiendish imbecilities seriously? Certainly not. They appeared just as idiotic to him as they appear to you or me. But the Palmers and Burlesons of the day made it impossible to say so in plain language, so he said so behind a smoke-screen of gaudy poetry. How Dante would have roared if he could have known that six hundred years later the President of the United States, as a good Baptist, would take the whole thing with utter seriousness, and deliver a nonsensical harangue upon the lessons in it for American Christians!

The case of Wagner's "Parsifal" is still more remarkable. Even Nietzsche was deceived by it. Like the most maudlin German stock-broker's wife at Baireuth he mistook the composer's elaborate and outrageous burlesque of Christianity for a tribute to Christianity, and so denounced him as a jackass and refused to speak to him thereafter. To this day "Parsifal" is given with all the trappings of a religious ceremonial, and pious folks go to hear it who would instantly shut their ears if the band began playing "Tristan und Isolde." It has become, in fact, a sort of "Way Down East" or "Ben Hur" of music drama—a bait for luring patrons who are never seen in the opera-house otherwise. But try to imagine such a thumping atheist as Wagner writing a religious opera seriously! And if, by any chance, you succeed in imagining it, then turn to the Char-Freitag music, and play it on your victrola. Here is the central scene of the piece, the moment of most austere solemnity—and to it Wagner fits music that is so luscious and so fleshly—indeed, so downright lascivious and indecent—that even I, who am almost anæsthetic to such provocations, blush and giggle every time I hear it. The Flower Maidens do not raise my blood-pressure a single ohm; I have actually snored through the whole second act of "Tris-

tan." But when I hear that Char-Freitag music all of my Freudian suppositions begin groaning and stretching their legs in the dungeons of my unconscious. And what does Char-Freitag mean? Char-Freitag means Good Friday.

§ 4

The Critic as Gentleman.—It is impossible for the true critic to be a gentleman. I use the word in its common meaning, to wit, a man who avoids offense against punctilio, who is averse to an indulgence in personalities, who is ready to sacrifice the truth to good manners and good form, and who has respect and sympathy for the feelings of his inferiors. Criticism is intrinsically and inevitably a boorish art. Its practitioner takes color from it, and his gentlemanliness—if he has any—promptly becomes lost in its interpretative labyrinths. The critic who is a gentleman is no critic. He is merely the dancing-master of an art.

§ 5

Impressionism and Expressionism.—Impressionism: the expression of an impression. Expressionism: the impression of an expression.

§ 6

A Needed Reform.—Now that bootlegging, once confined to the South and Middle West, has taken on the proportions of a nation-wide business, enlisting millions of capital and affording a livelihood to thousands of investors and wage-earners, it is high time to look into its methods and its personnel, and to take measures against its corruption by abuses. Legally, I suppose, very little can be done. The legislative arm is paralyzed by the idiotic constitutional assumption that the public sale of alcoholic liquors has ceased. But the history of the common law (as lately expounded very eloquently by Prof. Dr. Roscoe Pound, of Harvard) shows that

the same difficulty has been encountered very often in the past, and that it has been surmounted successfully. What the legislatures can't do, our grand and petit juries *can* do, and must do. That is to say, they must devise means of regulating bootlegging, so that those practitioners of it who are honest may be protected from unfair competition, and those who are scoundrels may be whipped of justice. One bootlegger of the latter variety, peddling poisonous synthetic gin in a large city, is sufficient to discredit the whole profession.

In the old days of the regulation of what is called "vice," before vice crusading dispersed prostitution to all parts of our larger cities, the practitioners of the venerable profession were supervised, in certain enlightened cities, by a device which might be conveniently applied to bootlegging. Even in those days, it will be recalled, it was theoretically unlawful to keep a bordello, and any woman keeping one was liable to summary arrest. This liability, of course, exposed the proprietors of such establishments to constant blackmail by the police, just as bootleggers are now blackmailed by the prohibition enforcement officers. In order to put an end to the abuse—which caused the ladies to rob their patrons, just as the bootleggers now rob their customers—the appropriate judicial officers set up a system whereby every offending Jezebel was formally brought into court, once or twice a year, and forced to pay a fine. If she had conducted her establishment in an orderly manner and there were no complaints against her, that fine was small. If, on the contrary, she had permitted disorder on her premises, she was fined heavily. If, finally, she had connived at anything downright criminal, such as the garroting of a Y. M. C. A. secretary or the robbery of a United States Senator, she was sent to jail, and her place ordered closed.

This system, though plainly extra-legal, worked admirably. The learned judges in charge of it were enabled to confine "vice" to appropriate neighbor-

hoods, to divorce it from robbery, and, most important of all, to prevent blackmailing by the police, who invariably practise the art when the way is open. The vice crusaders, when the white slave buncombe of nine or ten years ago gave them their chance, destroyed the scheme by appealing to the letter of the law (*cf.* Matthew XXIII), and so the ladies of the town were scattered, and now they settle wherever they may and carry on their business in the ferocious manner of curb-brokers or small-town bankers, and the police prey upon them in a wholesale and lamentable manner. The net result is that the amount of money they take from the average American city is three or four times what it was under the system displaced, and the incidence of what is mellifluously called social disease, despite the improvements in prophylaxis, is at least twice as great. So much for the practical benefits of "moral" reforms.

What I suggest is that the abandoned plan be revived, and applied to the bootleggers. As things stand, there is no way of controlling them. A bootlegger who manufactures bad gin out of cologne spirits and juniper oil is just as able to pay the graft demanded by the police as a bootlegger who observes the strictest ethics of his profession, and so deals only in the genuine smuggled goods. In fact, he is more able to pay it, for his margin of profit is much larger. The consequences are visible on all sides; outrageous prices, universal distrust, and a great deal of mysterious illness. If, now, the proper judicial officers should take the matter into their own hands, summon all known bootleggers before them, lay down reasonable rules for the conduct of the business, and keep it in order by a system of graduated fines, there would be an immediate fall in prices, the police would be unable to carry on their present blackmailing, and innocent men and women would be protected from the dangers of poisoning. Say a bootlegger offered one a case of genuine Scotch whiskey, and it turned out on examination to be an Italian imitation,

with crudely forged labels. One would simply take a specimen bottle to the judge, a note would be made of it, and when the offending bootlegger came up for his annual, or semi-annual, or monthly inspection he would be fined \$1,000, and perhaps sent to jail. By the same token it would be possible for the clients of a thoroughly reliable and honorable bootlegger to speak for him when his turn came, and so have his fine reduced to a purely nominal sum.

It will be objected, of course, that this scheme would violate the law—the same objection, precisely, that the vice crusaders made to the brothel regulation that I have described. But the choice, it must be manifest, is not between violating the law and not violating the law, but between violating it decently and in order and violating it corruptly and dangerously, as is done now. If anything in this world is plain, it must be that no conceivable scheme of enforcement will ever make the large cities of the United States actually dry. In the smaller towns it may be possible, at least theoretically, but certainly no one not idiotic looks for it to happen in such places as New York and Chicago. The present scheme is simply a scheme for debauching the police—and the cost of debauching them must be borne by the consumer. Worse, it tends to degrade the bootlegger—in fact, to make him a professional criminal, with all a professional criminal's lack of conscience. He has no definite standing, his rights are not protected, he is subject to the competition of the lowest sorts of scoundrels. No wonder he occasionally works off a case of raspberry juice as vermouth, or sells a barrel of crudely reinforced near-beer as a barrel of authentic *Helles!* You would do the same if your business were invaded by a horde of pickpockets, ex-policemen, jockeys, apartment house janitors, street-walkers and other such criminals, and you had to submit to the arbitrary and unconscionable extortions of an indefinite number of enforcement officers, always changing and always rapacious.

My plan, I need not argue, would also greatly improve the morale of the enforcement force, and so inspire it to an honest effort to take and jail all of the current forgers of labels, refillers of bottles, and manufacturers of wood alcohol liqueurs. The trouble at present is that the temptation confronting the enforcement officers is almost irresistible, and that even when one of them manages to resist it he must nevertheless face the public suspicion that he has succumbed. Popular cynicism, in fact, now bathes the Prohibition spies and *agents provocateurs* with all of the cruel doubts that it used to heap upon Sunday-school superintendents. No one seems to want to admit that it is possible for them—or, at all events, for some of them—to be honest.

This is unjust. I believe that a good many of them are absolutely honest, even today, and that many more would be honest if it were not so difficult. They carry on an enterprise that is intrinsically hopeless, just as the enterprise of putting down "vice" is intrinsically hopeless. If they were permitted to abandon it, and to concentrate their effort upon lesser enterprises of a more feasible character, they would improve in morale, and also in morals. No man can do good work if impossibilities are demanded of him. To ask any body of men, however ingenious and however conscientious, to reduce New York—or Chicago, or San Francisco, or Philadelphia, or Boston, or Baltimore, or Pittsburgh, or any other large town—to actual dryness is to ask an impossibility beside which jumping over the moon sinks to the estate of a parlor trick for paralytics, and squaring the circle becomes a recreation for morons, or even for Congressmen.

I am often accused of failing to make my criticisms of life in the Republic constructive—of tearing down without building up. Well, here I offer constructive criticism. My scheme is simple, convenient, inexpensive, and safe. It would diminish roguery. It would put an end to the corruption of the police. It would protect the inno-

cent. Which great American city will be the first to adopt it?

§ 7

Reply to a Remonstrance.—Nevertheless, my dear fellow, simply try to imagine Beethoven playing golf! Or joining a Rotary Club! Or reading the *Philadelphia Ledger*! Or voting for Harding!

§ 8

Observation No. 314.—It may not always be true, yet it has been my experience to find it common, that love and a precisely conducted household do not often go together. When I see a home meticulously managed, I generally feel, and learn subsequently, that the love of the man for the woman and of the woman for the man has been chilled in the degree that their house and home have been brought to a point of machinelike operation. Love and butlers are not handmaidens. Laughing love and the happiness that comes of it are given to carelessness and disarray, at least in some measure. Perfect routine is a stranger to them. No woman who loves a man deeply, wildly, passionately, has ever been a perfect housekeeper.

§ 9

Moral Reminiscence.—In my apprentice years as a literatus I made a living, like many others, as a dramatic critic for a daily newspaper. Compared with certain others I was ignorant, but compared to the great majority, even of old practitioners, I was extremely well-informed, and hence very cocky. Worse, I had a waggish pen, and knew how to make the booboisie snicker. This gift, exercised upon the poor mimes who frequented the town of my residence, frequently cast a blight upon the box-office, and so the local Frohmans often complained to my paper, and even demanded that I be cashiered forthwith. But that paper was so rich that it could afford to be virtuous, and every

time the Frohmans complained I simply threw on ten or twenty more amperes of my mockery, and drove a few more hundreds of possible patrons away from their houses. Finally, they gave it up. Then I tired of my job, and quit.

Who was right, the Frohmans or I? I had no doubt in those days that I was right. I have no doubt today that the Frohmans were right. On the one hand stood a group of reputable business men who had invested their money in a lawful business, and were trying to make a living at it; on the other hand stood an irresponsible young man who deliberately tried to cut down their profits. I do not say that I was wrong about the plays and players they offered to the boobs; on the contrary, I believe that I was usually right. But the essential thing is that I was absolutely without conscience or responsibility in the matter—that the worst that could have happened to me would have been the loss of my job, and that this was very unlikely and I knew it to be unlikely—that, to all intents and purposes, I was engaged in a combat in which my antagonists could and did suffer grievous wounds, whereas I myself stood as secure against injury as if I had been armed with Excalibur.

That was years ago, before experience of the world had brought me sense, and before foreign travel had awakened me to a consciousness of honor. I was young, and hence a savage. But I often think of it today. And whenever I think of it, the thought intrudes that this, fundamentally, is what is the matter with the whole art of criticism: that every critic is in the position, so to speak, of God, and has no responsibility save to his own decency. He can smite without being smitten. He challenges other men's work, and is exposed to no like challenge of his own. The more reputations he breaks, the more his own reputation is secured—and there is no lawful agency to determine, as he himself professes to determine in the case of other men, whether his motives are honest and his methods are

fair. God Himself is less irresponsible, for He at least must keep the respect of the theologians, or go down to ruin with His predecessors, all flung into the ash-heap for high crimes and misdemeanors, but the critic is judged only by public opinion—nay, by a very narrow and special opinion—and if he is a clever man, if he really knows his trade, he is himself the chief influence in forming that opinion.

§ 10

Vox Populi.—Sometimes, of course, the great masses of human Fords and Camels are right about this or that, just as the rev. clergy are sometimes right. They were right about slavery in the United States; they were right about Bryan; they were right now and then during the late war. But if the fact revives your belief in their intelligence, go read the arguments whereby the Abolitionists goaded them into the Civil War, and the reasoning whereby McKinley and Mark Hanna rescued them from the Bryan madness in 1896, and the preposterous nonsense with which Woodrow wooed and won them in 1914, 1915 and 1916!

§ 11

The Penalty.—One of the harshest burdens that a civilized man living under a democracy must bear is this: that all his acts are ascribed to sordid and degrading motives, i.e., to the sort of motives that would move his fellow citizens if they were capable of his acts. In many years of controversy, chiefly with Methodists, Prohibitionists, the petty variety of pedagogues, politicians, anti-vivisectionists, osteopaths and other such vermin, I have noticed that they constantly assume that I am as venal as they are, and hence incapable of maintaining any opinion without being directly rewarded for it. The Prohibitionists, in the old days, accused me of being in the pay of the brewers; today they accuse me of being in the pay of the bootleggers. The

Methodists, when I object to their buffooneries, charge that I am a secret agent of Rome. The osteopaths and their associated quacks hint that I take a retainer from the Medical Trust, *i.e.*, from such fellows as the Mayo brothers, Dr. George Crile and Dr. William S. Halsted. And when I am not accused of accepting money I am accused of sycophancy, of cowardice, of superstition, or of some other peculiar weakness of the *Homo boobus*. During the war, every time I loosed a cackle against American hypocrisy and knavery I was denounced either as a hireling of the Wilhelmstrasse or as a German patriot of almost Rooseveltian imbecility. After the war, when I presumed to speak out against the shysterism of the American courts, the extravagant tyrannies of Burleson, Palmer *et al.* and the poltrooneries of the American Legion, I was damned as a Bolshevik, *i.e.*, as a mixture of brigand and idiot.

I formally protest against these libels, and give notice that I shall challenge them hereafter in a very waspish and unpleasant manner. In my own case, of course, they do no practical harm, for I have no desire for the favorable opinion of the proletariat, but in other cases they obviously work against the good of the country. Imagine an educated and self-respecting American going into politics—not for selfish ends, but for the altruistic and patriotic purpose of displacing at least one thief from the public trough, and of raising at least one voice against the prevailing stupidity, corruption and dishonor. How many Americans of the mob would actually believe in his *bona fides*? Not one in a hundred thousand. The others would assume as a matter of course that he was animated by the same low motives that would move *them* in like case—in brief, that his apparent decency was no more than a mask to hide an interior villainy—that he was out, in the common phrase, for what he could get out of it. Every intelligent American knows this to be true, and so it is very rare for an

intelligent American, if also honest, to go into politics. The result is visible daily. Our politics is so degraded that its most ordinary and routine practises would disgust and humiliate a society of polecats. The men who could improve it are kept out by the mob's belief that they are members of the mob themselves, and thus share in its venality and subscribe to its code of honor.

§ 12

Clothes and Music.—Although there doesn't seem to be much sense in the remark, I yet believe that fine music and fashion somehow do not jibe. I don't believe that one can get full pleasure out of fine music when one is all dolled up; Beethoven can't be profoundly enjoyed in a swallowtail, nor the songs of Schumann in décolleté. Fashion is all right for the banalities of the operatic stage, but truly beautiful music and *négligé* go best together.

§ 13

Personal Notice.—Every mail brings me a letter urging me to contribute money to this great cause or that, or to consecrate my God-given literary talents to it, or to bore my friends with solicitations about it, on the loftiest patriotic and altruistic grounds. Service, spelled with a capital S, seems to be a shibboleth that is extraordinarily effective against the pocket-books and tear-ducts of the American boobery. If it were not for their susceptibility to it, the Y. M. C. A. would go bankrupt, and all the other swindles that are aimed at them would show a heavy falling off in receipts. May I be permitted, therefore, to give formal notice that, for the purposes of all such thimble-rigging schemes, I have not the honor of being a boob? Not a cent of my funds shall ever be devoted, with my consent, to the uplift of my fellow men. Never willingly shall I give any aid, direct or indirect, to the spread of Christian snivelization in any part of the world. As for what becomes of

the Republic after I am dead, I hereby make public that I do not care a single damn.

§ 14

Off Again, On Again.—In the days of genuine monarchy, now everywhere denaturized by the international uplift, one of the chief arguments against it was that it exposed the life and limb of the subject, to say nothing of his property, to the exigencies of dynastic interest. That is to say, it was argued that war was waged and peace was made, not in the interest of the whole population, but simply in the interest of the ruling family. In particular, this charge was frequently brought against the Hapsburgs, whose insatiable land hunger was sometimes calamitous to the peoples they ruled.

A sound objection to monarchy, it must be obvious. A true bill. But I am unable to see that democracy has brought any appreciable improvement. In the old days policies were determined by the self-interest of the king; today they are just as surely determined by the self-interest of the reigning demagogue. If it was Frederick the Great's desire to cut a figure in the world that got Prussia into the first Silesian War, then it was quite as plainly the late Woodrow's desire to cut an even gaudier figure in the world that got us into the *cloaca maxima* of the Paris Conference. A demagogue, like a king, is simply a man with a special gift of inflaming the childish imagination of the masses. The king does it by virtue of his position; the demagogue by virtue of his talent for nonsense. In each case the best thought of the country affected is frequently arrayed against the performer, and the best interests of that country (as proved by subsequent events) are actually damaged, but in each case the mob follows the flag and the band-wagon.

The truth is that dynastic interests probably offer a far less serious menace to national well-being, taking one day with another, than the purely personal

interests of such political mountebanks as Lloyd George, Churchill, Ebert, Briand, Clemenceau, Roosevelt, Scheidemann, Lenin, Trotzky and Wilson. A king may be extremely selfish, but the very dynastic considerations that make him so also make him look into the future; he has a son and a grandson to consider as well as himself. But a demagogue under democracy, if he knows anything at all, knows that his time of period is necessarily limited—that soon or late the mob will depose him, and substitute some rival charlatan. Hence he has far less reason than the king has to consider any national interest that may be opposed to his private and immediate interest. He can rock the boat all he pleases, knowing very well that some other quack will have to right it after it upsets. Moreover, a demagogue under democracy lacks the professional pride and conscientiousness that even the worst king usually has: he comes from a much lower class, and is quite devoid of any aristocratic sense of honor. Knowing how brief his tenure is, it is hard for him to convince himself that his private interest is identical with the best interest of his country—usually an easy matter for a king. Who believes that Lloyd George, for example, if he thought that he could extend his own time in office by doing England some gross disservice, would refrain? Who believes that, with an imbecile mob bawling for national suicide and an intelligent and patriotic minority seeking to hold it back, he would go with the minority? Or that Briand would? Or Viviani? Or Harding? Or any of the ex-shoemakers and country schoolmasters who now rule and ruin Germany?

§ 15

The Short Story.—Every day I receive at least one short-story manuscript from some author or other who tells me in an accompanying note that he (or she) was advised to send it to THE SMART SET by a professor in one of the apparently innumerable schools

of short-story writing. I do not know at first hand what is taught in such seminaries, or what the experience and intelligence is of the pedagogues who teach it, but this I do know: that all such stories turn out, on reading, to be very bad. More, they all seem to be bad in the same way. That is to say, they all represent efforts to devise an "original" plot, and then to fit characters to it. Really good short-stories, I believe, are concocted in an exactly opposite way. That is to say, the author first visualizes a character, and then imagines him in a series of situations. If the character is seen clearly, if the author visualizes him as vividly as we visualize the people all about us, then the nature of the situations is of minor consequence: the result is bound to be a good story, even if crudely written. The best stories of the world are quite devoid of what bad authors call plots. But they are full of accurate and penetrating observation.

As I say, I have no personal acquaintance with the obscure gentlemen who profess the science of fiction in the academies of the Republic, but judging by the work of their pupils I venture the guess that they suffer from the same handicap which oppresses the teachers of English. That is to say, they are quite unable to perform decently the business that they essay to teach. I doubt that any university, even in America, would employ a teacher of chemistry who was unable to make an ordinary urinalysis correctly, or a teacher of German who could not read the *Staats-Zeitung* without a dictionary, or a teacher of mathematics who was incompetent to solve a simple equation, but when it comes to the writing of the English language, a far more difficult enterprise than any of those that I have mentioned, they seem to hold that any reasonably literate man (or woman) is good enough. The result is visible in the atrocious style of the average educated American. If you want to discover the sources of the American business letter, with its idiotic circumlocutions and its painful misuse of

words, simply go to the text-books of the rhetoric professors. There you will find the same clumsy thinking, the same flatulent bombast, and the same magnificent anæsthesia to the rhythms of the language. I know of no such text that is not a shining example of bad writing. Even the best of them too often suggests a handbook of therapeutics by Lydia Pinkham.

The trouble with all of the professors is that they try to account for good English by sawing it into sections and filing it in pigeon-holes. Their books are all full of solemn nonsense about various divisions and sub-divisions of style. There are, in fact, only two divisions in English: good English and bad English. The former is achieved by the simple process of putting clear thoughts into plain words, with an ear ever alert to the color and rhythm of those words. If the thought is muddled, then no conceivable art will ever make the writing good. And if the words are obscure, then no imaginable reader will ever unearth the thought. There are no other rules. The better a writer's mastery of words, of course—that is, the firmer and more extensive his grasp upon his materials—the more gracefully and picturesquely he will be able to express his ideas. But unless he has been taught that he must first reduce those ideas to simplicity and clarity—or has learned it by the study of sound writers—then he will never be able to write decently, no matter how diligently he sweats through the donkeyish categories of the rhetoric professors. This capital fact is not taught in the lecture-room for the plain reason that very few such professors are aware of it. They apparently believe that the writing of English is simply a matter of memorizing a mass of nonsensical definitions. It is actually a matter of forgetting all definitions. I am firmly convinced, indeed, that a man who knows just what an epiploce is, or an epistrophe, or an asyndeton, will never be able to make a good one, just as an anatomist who has dissected half a dozen head of women will never thereafter desire

to kiss one, or even to speak to one.

To return to the professors of fiction, they apparently corrupt and obfuscate the art they profess in much the same way. What they concentrate their attention upon, judging by the product of their pupils, are the immaterial externals of story writing—the little tricks that are worthless unless there is sound stuff behind them. O. Henry seems to be the idol and ideal of all these pupils—an author who never created a single living character, and whose chief admirers are readers of the *Saturday Evening Post* and school-teachers. The tricks of O. Henry, laboriously taught to imbeciles by worse imbeciles, spoil nine-tenths of the stories that I have to read every day. I struggle through the intricacies of a complex plot, with a moving-picture surprise at the end, only to discover that the people of the tale are stuffed dummies, without either souls or giz-zards. The cheap magazines are full of such puerile stuff. Its manufacture becomes a great industry. But who ever heard of a manufacturer of it emerging from the sweat-shop, and writing anything honestly describable as literature? Literature is not written by tricksters, but by men and women who begin by observing the life about them, and who are so profoundly moved by it that they are impelled irresistibly to record their observations. A true story-teller never has to study text-books on the concoction of plots. Whenever he sees a human being he imagines a plot sufficient for him.

It is common for rhetoricians to make a distinction between plot and style—

that is, between the content of a story and its manner. This distinction is largely imaginary. Any man who can imagine a moving story about genuine human beings and who has enough command of the language to express his ideas—any such man can write what deserves to be called good English. Whenever you find bad English—that is, tedious, blowzy and obscure English—you will find that muddled thinking is at the bottom of it. Such muddled thinking explains most of the obscurity of Henry James. James, to be sure, is sometimes unintelligible to the general, and hence repellent, simply because he deals in ideas that are above the mental reach of the general, but not infrequently those ideas pass beyond his own reach too, and then he is tangled and stupid. At the other extreme is Dreiser, a man often denounced because his style is without ornament. To the uncritical it therefore seems to be without distinction. But when Dreiser is dealing with anything that he has visualized clearly—say the character of Muldoon, or Jennie Gerhardt at Lester's funeral—his English is actually beautifully clear, direct, melodious and charming. He then writes vastly better than any of his critics. When he writes badly—that is, artificially, painfully, obscurely—it is simply because the ideas he is seeking to convey are not clear in his own mind. Are his philosophical essays hard to read? Then it is because the thinking behind them is muddled. When his thoughts are sound and well-ordered, as in "Art, Life and America," his style is sound and well-ordered too.



Rupert Goes on the Loose

By S. N. Behrman and J. K. Nicholson

I

FREEPORT, Illinois, hasn't stopped talking about Rupert Honeywell yet. It probably never will. Everything about him has become a tradition: his miraculous vests, his flowing ties, his samovar, his personal idiosyncracies, his startling views of morality and that crowning event which caused his expulsion from Kenton's classic halls. It seems hard to believe that Rupert, who now rules a cult of his own in the literary world, once belonged to Freeport and Kenton College. But he did! While in Freeport he did teach sociology at Kenton. He did live with the three Martin spinsters. He did attempt, in that chaste environment, to perpetrate an orgy of Babylonian wickedness. All true!

But to go back. Rupert was twenty-seven then and he came to Freeport to get leisure to write his novel. He had been endeavoring to write it in his lodgings in Greenwich Village, but he found that atmosphere too distracting. There were too many parties, too many attractive bobbed heads, too many dabblers in psycho-analysis and its allied arts. Unconsciously he had drifted into the way of being a typical Villager: that is to say, a person who finds conversation easier than creation. Every time he started to write his novel along came one of the gang who suggested something more interesting. And off he went without another thought of his Great Work.

Things had been going on this way for some time, until one day, when Rupert was taking a constitutional around the Square—one starry morn-

ing about two A. M.—the truth broke in upon him. He must get away from all his pleasure-loving playmates. That was it—he must get away. But how . . . ?

In his mail box next morning, as if in answer to his rather baffling query, he found a letter from a teacher's agency asking him if he cared to teach. There was a position open for an instructor in sociology at Kenton College, Freeport, Ill. Would he accept it? He went out to The Early Bird for a cup of black coffee. He wanted to think it over. By noon he had wired his acceptance of the berth.

It was with a sense of immense relief that he got on the train at the Grand Central that would take him as far as Chicago on his way to Freeport. For a week he had been partied and dined. There had been farewell suppers at The Pink Goose, The March Hare, The Little Nest and other rendezvous of the esoteric.

As he settled back comfortably in the Pullman he congratulated himself on outwitting the Village. Most of his artistic friends secretly dreamed of being famous and moving to the steam-heated apartments uptown. But, since living in the Village kept them from working enough to become famous, they never moved.

"Freeport may not be much, but it is nearer Park Avenue and author's royalties than Washington Square," he decided.

All of which may be true enough in theory, but Rupert, alas, was leaving his temperament out of account. Having been no farther West than Weehawken he visualized the calm peace

and quiet of a college town—a prairie Athens. His classes, he mused, would be few and he would have an immense leisure for writing. With his novel finished he would go back to New York a lion. . . .

However, poor Rupert didn't know Freeport; he didn't know Kenton College; and he didn't know the Martin sisters.

II

FREEPORT didn't look like much as he got off the train, but Rupert didn't mind that. You couldn't expect much of these small towns. Hadn't he read "Main Street?" The college, he fancied, was removed from the town, austere old ivy-covered buildings, a noble, elm-shaded campus, a transplanted Academy.

So he gathered up his luggage with cheerful confidence and got into a moth-eaten vehicle known as a rock-away. Rupert told the driver he wanted to be taken to Kenton College, and, after about twenty minutes of rockingaway the hack stopped before a ramshackle brick building, almost flush with the road. Rupert, who had been thinking over the third chapter of his novel, woke up startledly from a brown-study.

"I said I want to go to Kenton College!"

"This here's it!" announced the *cocher* emphatically.

About a dozen young fellows, wearing gaudy skull-caps, were standing about the doors. They carried books under their arms. Could it be that they were students? Rupert thought they looked like farmhands on a holiday.

But what depressed him most were the buildings of the college itself, of which, as far as he could see, there were two. There was the dilapidated structure in front of which he stood, and another one to the rear which looked like a dormitory. Just across the road he noticed a cow-pasture with upright crossed posts at either end. Rupert was not a devotee of athletics,

but he fancied that this was the football field. . . . His heart sank.

A few moments later one of the students was ushering him into the office of President Judson. Rupert had imagined that that executive would resemble Henry Ward Beecher. What he saw was a baldish little man in a musty suit, with a worried expression on his face of a housewife who had mislaid the dust-pan.

"I am Mr. Honeywell — Rupert Honeywell," said Rupert stiffly. "You had my telegram, I hope."

"Oh, yes . . . oh, yes. . . . You see, this is registration day . . . very busy . . . detail . . . administration and so forth. Happy to see you though."

And President Judson extended a cold, clammy hand to the new member of his faculty.

III

ALMOST from the first Kenton and Freeport began to buzz about Rupert. No one just like him had ever been seen before. He secured rooms in the home of the Martin sisters—three middle-aged spinsters who eked out their existence by keeping one boarder, Prof. Walters, who had taught Latin for twenty years, had lived with the Martins up until the time of his death, which occurred shortly before Rupert's arrival. It was at President Judson's suggestion that Rupert became Prof. Walter's successor in the Martin house.

Soon the furnishings of his room became a topic of hushed conversation among college circles.

The Martin sisters, who were at once shocked and fascinated by the transformation wrought by their new boarder in their plain, wall-papered chambers, were not long in spreading the astounding news. He had all of the old plush furniture removed and replaced them with his own things which he had sent on from New York. The walls he covered with Assyrian prints; drawings by Aubrey Beardsley, decadent and moribund ladies dying

gracefully of strange ailments. Miss Isabelle Martin declared that those pictures made her feel quite "spooky." In one corner of his room he placed his beloved samovar, an article of furniture upon which his landladies looked with great distrust. And the lighting! Candles burned from wall-sconces—Rupert would allow nothing else. There was a Buddha crouched in a miniature temple; there were photographs of Greek sculptures which somehow seemed more naked than the sculptures themselves; there were bizarre cushions strewn about; and there was a narghli pipe. And, as Hester Martin said, the smell of incense about the place was positively indecent!

Rupert Honeywell's rooms, he called them his "chambers," became a sort of by-word around the college. Their notoriety was the sort that hovers about a chamber of horrors and a seraglio. The townspeople talked about Rupert's lodgings with a subtle feeling that they were being very naughty. And naturally all this upset the Martin sisters very much, as they were good Baptists with a pew and an ancestral stained-glass window.

When Rupert became conscious of the furore his chambers created he got into the habit of asking favored pupils to drop in for tea, and once he actually gave a party which was attended by several faculty members and their wives. The effect on his visitors was sensational. The trappings, so common to Greenwich Village, shocked the Kentonites beyond words. Rupert read to his visitors from decadent Frenchmen they had never heard of: Verlaine and Huysmanns, Rambaoud and Villiers de L'Isle Adam. He also preached a philosophy of subversive estheticism that shocked and fascinated them. Through all this Rupert became something of a Cult among the students. A little group of serious thinkers gathered around him that imitated his tastes and repeated the tales of his eccentricities.

It could never be said of Rupert that

he was popular at Kenton, but he achieved the higher distinction of being considered "strange" and "interesting." Until one day—or rather one evening—there came a change. And the sad part of it was that poor Rupert was perfectly unconscious of the havoc he had wrought with his own position.

It was at the reception at President Judson's house that it happened. Rupert came to the festivity arrayed in his marvelously tailored evening clothes, a white gardenia in his button-hole. From the first he stalked about with languid detachment, not unlike a cockatoo among sparrows. He had a habit of lifting a sofa pillow to the mantel-shelf and leaning against it, puffing a cigarette through a long ivory holder. At intervals he would bestir himself and bend over the shoulder of one of his colleague's wives to mutter something mildly shocking. Becoming bored with the insipid repartee Rupert at last retired to a divan. The evening should not be entirely lost. He would create a new chapter for his novel. Thus he sat, oblivious of his surroundings, like Rodin's Thinker.

Suddenly, as if he were Archimedes in the bathtub, he jumped up and shouted "Eureka!"

The company, sipping tea and eating ginger snaps, was startled. Mrs. Judson, a mild, somewhat blue-nosed lady, inquired whether Mr. Honeywell were not well.

"I should say so! I've just thought of something that has been troubling me for weeks. It's a point in my novel!"

"Won't you tell us what it's about?" asked Mrs. Judson innocently.

"Certainly," said Rupert.

He felt quite amiable having just settled a knotty point.

"You see, my book tells about a young man who doesn't get on very well with women. He likes them but he is unable to get on with them. He's lived with several—about four or five by the time the book's half through. But always his attitude has been merely experimental. Each time he has left

the particular woman in disgust; none has been able to hold him. . . ."

A decided chill pervaded the room. And Rupert misinterpreted the chill. He thought it was skepticism.

"You think this attitude incredible," he cried, slightly nettled. Then let me tell you it's true! Because I am the hero of the book, and I know what I'm writing about. Every one of those women—I've known all five—intimately . . . why, I nearly married one!"

IV

It took Rupert nearly a minute to realize that these good people were actually shocked. The silence that settled on the Judson parlor was appalling; he found, after a few moments, that no one was speaking to him. So in a little while he said good night to his host and hostess and left.

The next day President Judson called him into his private office and berated him for his conduct of the night before. Rupert defended himself stoutly; he had told only what was in his novel and his novel was strictly in the best tradition of modern realism. The president ended by telling him that if he expected to continue teaching in Kenton he must conform to the views of the community.

And then while the head of the college had Rupert on the green carpet he proceeded to bring other charges against him: for instance, he had never appeared in church, he had been seen smoking on the campus, and he was delinquent in his attendance of faculty meetings. Rupert felt that he ought to protest indignantly in behalf of personal freedom and academic liberty, but he could say nothing. He left President Judson without a word. . . .

From that day the taste of Freeport and Kenton College became bitter in Rupert's mouth. He was desperately bored by everything connected with education. He longed more than ever for the freedom of his beloved Village. Here there were no concerts, no theatres, no kindred spirits.

He brooded over his lot so intensely that he found it impossible to work on his novel.

But for six more weeks Rupert stood it. He attended to his professional duties, but as soon as he was through he would rush to his haven and forget the Philistines playing the piano and reading Baudelaire. President Judson and the Martin sisters congratulated themselves, for they thought that he was well disciplined. They mistook his apathy for obedience.

One day a friend of his in New York, an artist, sent him a picture he had just painted, but which on account of its "advanced technique" he had been unable to sell. Rupert loved it—a startling study in the nude—and hung it on the wall over his bed. Upon returning from his classes next day he found it in the waste-paper basket and a note on his table which read:

We cannot have such immoral pictures hanging on our walls. If you can't do without such things we shall have to ask you to find other quarters. We don't feel as though we were living in a moral house with that naked woman hanging there.

Isabelle Martin
Hester Martin
Ida Martin

V

THAT note infuriated Rupert more than anything that had happened since his arrival in Freeport. It was the last straw. Why was he embittering himself, tarnishing his æsthetic soul in this God-forsaken place? He would leave at once! They were impossible! In his heart lurked the spirit of revenge. Yes, he would leave, but before he left he would do something to shock this miserable little college town. He would exit like a villain in a blaze of scandal. He would give them something to *really* talk about. . . . !

In his endeavor to cool his ire he took a walk. He wanted to think. For two hours he tramped the country roads trying to devise some way in which to shock the natives. As he was passing through Freeport on his way back he saw that the local "Opera House" was

lit up and that garish three-sheets in front announced that "Oh Daddy!" the gay musical success, was playing there that night. This was the type of theatrical entertainment which satisfied the corn-feds, he thought contemptuously. . . . But he stopped! An idea had struck him . . . a wonderful idea. It was the very thing, of course! The visit of "Daddy" was providential, little short of miraculous. . . .

Rupert was as excited as a school-boy. He went up to the box-office and bought a loge (the Opera House did not have boxes—it had loges) for the performance. Then he went back to his rooms and changed his clothes. He dressed with exquisite care. . . . And as he dressed he sang. For the first time in months he was happy. He was going back to New York again. This was to be his last night in Freeport. And he meant to do his best to make it memorable for himself and for Freeport.

Purposely he entered his loge rather late, just as the overture began. He felt conscious of the buzz that went over the house. In the first place theatre-goers in Freeport didn't dress; and in the second place it was pretty well known about town that he was on the faculty at Kenton. And the faculty never attended the theatre except when some worn-out Thespian descended in their midst with Shakespearean repertoire.

All through the show—which was a dreary melange of cheap jokes and jazz—Rupert made himself conspicuous by winking at several of the chorus ladies. By the end of the performance the audience was watching Rupert as much as it was watching the proceedings on the stage.

When the curtain went down Rupert, exhilarated by the notion that he was playing a stage-door John for the first time in his life, went around to the alley, and waited for the girls to come out.

After a time two of them appeared—a brunette and a blonde. He lifted his silk hat and asked them whether they

wouldn't go for a bite with him at Endicott's Café. The girls readily agreed. They had already put him down as a "nut" and there had been a wager made back-stage as to who would "get" the unsuspecting Rupert.

Rupert had purposely suggested Endicott's rather than the more elaborate Commercial House because the former restaurant necessitated a walk half the length of Market Street. Escorting the two coryphees he walked down the street. By the time they reached Endicott's most everyone who had been to the theatre had seen them. He was quite happy as he noticed the sensation he was causing.

These show-girls were the first non-puritanical people Rupert had met since he left New York. They refreshed him with their naïve sophistication, their sprightly jollyng. After Rupert told them that he was from New York and going back tomorrow they warmed up to him. One of them, Connie, the blonde, played put-and-take with him on the table cloth. Rupert was really having a good time!

The café was full of people and they stared at Rupert's party with astonishment and envy. This fact spurred him on to greater effort in the way of making himself conspicuous. At one point he arose and proposed a toast to wine, woman and song that could be heard all over the room. The girls seconded him noisily. Agnes, the brunette, succeeded in getting the waiter's confidence to the extent that he gave her the address of a local bootlegger. Connie wrote the name and address on Rupert's shirt-front, and the three left the restaurant like three children on a lark. And they talk about that supper party in Endicott's to this day. . . .

The bootlegging gentleman provided them with a quart of doubtful corn whiskey, and armed with this and some bottles of ginger ale they hired a hack and rode to the Martin residence on Buckeye Street. The house was dark and Rupert cautioned the girls to tread softly, as the sisters must not be awakened.

Rupert's rooms reminded Connie of a fortune-telling booth she had once tended at Coney Island. But she liked it, and said she "couldn't imagine an honest-to-God place like this in a hick-town." They built a fire in the grate with Rupert's text-books and some profound essays on Municipal Government in Ecuador written by members of his classes. Rupert put on the soft pedal and played the piano, while his companion did "asthmatic" dancing. Tiring of this they had a pillow fight. Then Connie, who could not stand much whiskey, began to cry. She sobbingly told Rupert how she was the sole support of a widowed mother in Erie, Pa. It cost him twenty-five dollars to console her, but it was worth it.

By that time Rupert was conscious of stirring below stairs. The Martin sisters evidently had been awakened by their party and were listening to what was "going on." He decided that they must have something to listen to. As the corn whiskey diminished, their spirits rose. In a loud voice Rupert made a most wonderful speech full of æsthetic theory, in which he endeavored to make clear to Connie and Agnes the true principles of art. The problems of truth and beauty which had puzzled men for ages he easily explained to them. He found the girls a remarkably intelligent audience. Whenever he stopped for breath Connie yelled for him to "Go ahead!" He used a lot of queer sounding words the girls thought, but he was all right. Wasn't he, girls? . . . He was. . . .

And downstairs, the Martin sisters, quivering with excitement, drank in every word.

Finally, about three in the morning, there was silence in Rupert's rooms. The sisters consulted each other in bewildered whispers. What should they do? Hester was for going up to his door, knocking, and demanding that he leave the house at once with his hussies. But the gentler Isabelle would not allow it. She reminded them of the scandal.

After several hours of this indecision the three finally made up their minds to beard him in his den of iniquity together. They stole quietly up to his door and opened it. What they saw shocked them beyond their wildest dreams. There were two women in Rupert's room! Not one, mind you, but *two*! Both of them were lying abandonedly across Rupert's bed, sound asleep. Rupert himself was curled up in a grotesque posture on a rug under the samovar. And he was awake! He was fully dressed and staring at them with a sort of triumphant gleam in his eyes. . . .

Rupert never forgot how the three sisters looked as they stood there, their eyes fixed on the bed—three middle-aged Graces staring at two Dis-graces. After a horrified moment the sisters flew downstairs. And a moment later Rupert saw them crossing the yard in their shawls, headed in the direction of President Judson's residence. . . .

He got up with a shout of laughter, put on his hat and overcoat, and gathered his traveling bags together. Rupert hadn't drunk as much as he had pretended; as a matter of fact he had spent the night getting his bags packed and leaving instructions for the disposal of his things.

When the Martin sisters returned some time later with President Judson they found that Rupert had departed. But there was a note from him on the table addressed to the president of Kenton College, which they lost no time in reading:

To the Right Honorable President:

My intuition tells me you will soon be here to read this note. I am forced to resign my position on the faculty of your admirable institution. I find that the atmosphere of your community cramps my style.

May I ask a final favor of you: Please see that the two young ladies, who are now sleeping so peacefully on my bed, make their train for Lebanon on time. They told me they are to play there this evening. And if you could see your way to taking them to breakfast you would greatly oblige

Your humble colleague,
Rupert Honeywell.

Taggard Tries Them Out

By Amanda Benjamin Hall

I

"**S**HALL I go on reading from where we left off?" asked Miss Knight.

"Um, first you might ring up the hospital," suggested her patient with the satisfaction of the sick man who, in an elastic stretch of boredom, finds some task for his angel to perform and feels himself vicariously active. "Tell them it must be a blonde this time!"

Jimmy Taggard smiled whimsically and tapped the arms of his chair as, with the primmest possible sigh, Miss Knight acceded. Probably in all the world there was not a more perfect example of what a trained nurse should look like nor of how one should behave.

"Post-Graduate?" spoke her quiet, concise voice into the transmitter. "Give me the supervisor's office. . . . Miss Godwin, this is Miss Knight speaking. . . . My patient has dismissed the extra nurse, Miss O'Brien, or rather she dismissed herself. He wants a fresh one tomorrow. Send a blonde this time, please!" She flushed at the indignity of the message. "No, I said b-l-o-n-d-e, a nurse with gold hair. He likes it as bright as possible; he—er—especially demands an ornamental person. . . . A Miss Smithers, you say, freshly graduated?" She deferred to her employer. "Miss Godwin can send a very pretty young person, but she's had no outside experience!"

He made a careless gesture.

"Well, so much the better. You tell Old Mother Hubbard I want a fresh

downy chick to divert me, and her duties will not be very arduous."

"And tell her," he interrupted himself with amiable petulance, "that the last brunette was off color. Hair merely muddy, and the only strain of red was in her disposition."

The last conclusion brought a smile from Miss Knight.

"Miss Godwin says that she will do the best she can for you."

"Heigho," breathed the invalid and leaned back in his chair with the idle, shallow speculation of a child. "Wonder what she'll be like! It occurs to me that a blue-eyed woman with pure gold hair would light up this whole damned, dark apartment like an explosion. What do you say, Bunny?"

He had insisted upon the nickname because Miss Knight had been christened "Beatrice," because she disapproved of familiarity, and because he drew a perverse pleasure from outraging her notions of propriety. She was so holy, he told herself, so preposterously conventional!

"I think," returned Miss Knight, characteristically, "that the apartment isn't dark at all. It's fairly flooded with sunlight!"

Taggard threw back his head and laughed.

"Bunny," he observed, "you're as literal as the day of apple dumplings! The word 'dark' is susceptible to several interpretations. Any place is dark to a shut-in, especially when there's no one to amuse him. If you weren't as solemn as a plume off Grant's hearse—" He lifted his hand warningly. "Oh, yes, I know you take perfect care of me and that you're going

to say I'm free to find someone in your place, but you know it can't be done. The Lord certainly designed you for efficiency, but He forgot to make you aware that you are a woman. It's so dismal having to remember that you're a nurse and I'm a patient when we're only two caged human creatures after all. It keeps us from discussing realities. Bunny, do you know anything about love?"

She said with hauteur, "I have nursed two cases of it!"

Again he laughed, and this time the mirthful tears filled his eyes.

So contagious was his laughter that Miss Knight's lips relented and showed the edges of her really delightful teeth. She did not smile often and Jim counted each time as a rare æsthetic experience. As has been stated, she was nearly a perfect professional product. The sun came to marvel over her uniform and could find no blemish; its white was as dazzling as a snowdrift at break of day. The trim apron embraced her with a smooth band, the starched, mannish collar with two little gold rivets in back, though fatal to another woman, proved only that her head was superbly set from whatever angle you viewed it. She censored her hair like a Greek goddess, and Jim Taggard could never decide whether she was wholly complacent or wholly indifferent. Had she bared her throat or let that vigorous dark hair have its way, Taggard, the lover of women, must have seen her beauty signaling.

But she did none of these things. If his life was a failure she made it a successful one. She ordered his affairs with relentless precision, buttoned her collars in back and did her duty by the supernumerary nurse he employed to keep him amused. Jim called her a tyrant and bedeviled her shamefully in order that she might not guess how much in awe of her he felt.

Taggard was a fool, no doubt, but a strangely charming one. In the jut of his jaw, the merriment of his eye, the sensitive, affectionate mouth sur-

vived the old Jim Taggard, but his lines were new and the traitorous streaks of gray in his hair had fallen like frost overnight.

"Shall I go on with the reading?" Miss Knight again inquired, and was answered by gloom.

"Yes, I suppose you may as well, since you have no other parlor accomplishments. Look, Bu— Miss Knight, at the gray roadster skulking by and that lucky dog at the wheel. I'd like to step into his boots. I'd make that lean panther hum—"

She was used to his thwarted impulses and for the second time the book was discarded, for she knew that in the happy hunting-ground of his imagination he was cutting up the Fordham road with a vista to conquer and all the winds of the world yielding him right o' way. Before his accident befell him Jim Taggard had taken his amusement very seriously. He loved all that money can attract and that in turn attracts money. He loved a pursuit and a lavishing. He was the sort of dependent animal that cannot be left alone without symptoms of melancholia. That was why the blow had fallen so hard when he met with his accident.

Characteristically, it came about through pleasure; a party of them chasing out to a dance place on the Merrick road and Jimmy, as it were, settling the score. The others, there were two men and a girl, were flung clear of the heavy car, but Taggard was somehow pinned under and one leg so badly crushed that it became immediately necessary to amputate below the knee.

The realization of his loss, however, was not the hardest thing he had to face during those first ghastly weeks in the hospital. He knew, of course, that his physical status, that wonderful, coursing fitness, was destroyed for all time, but his mind was still rich with the sap of living. His friends would stick close now, he felt certain, and when he was able to go home he pictured a lively fraternization. And just

at first he was not disappointed in them.

Almost daily Miss Knight, his consistent nurse from the start, would announce Charlie Vanderpool, or Harrison Drew, or Dolly Flanders, the three who had been in the motor, and many others, greatly his debtors, and they would all pretend that he was right as a trivet. But more limp and infrequent grew these calls till Jim recognized that it was becoming a dreaded ordeal for them to visit him, that pity rendered them awkward and they could not now conceive of him as their play-fellow. And finally, to the unspeakable pain of Jim and the indignation of Nurse Knight, they eased away altogether, and he was left with the stiff, starchy girl who looked like an angel on a Christmas card, who gave him meticulous care and never a word of sympathy. Of all people on earth they seemed the two least likely to understand one another.

"She thinks I'm a rake," Jim told himself almost immediately, and added for sick revenge, "I think she's a prig. We couldn't talk—oh, not in a million years!"

But it became an engrossing game to shock her sensibilities with his rude bruit of the world, to soil her antiseptic consciousness.

"I'm not her kind of patient," he divined logically. "I'm—I'm one of the high-timers that her mother and the Methodist minister warned her against. She'll take offense and get herself transferred."

He bragged of his unregenerate bachelor life, so lately interrupted, and waited for her to leave. But Miss Knight, though, as he told himself, utterly without humor, was not devoid of stanchness. Once she did say with sly sarcasm, a trifle pityingly, too, "It must be considerable comfort to you now to know that you left no stone unturned."

In the bitterness of his abandonment his only makeshift was one of beneficence. He drew pretty nurses by the magnet of his starved interest and gen-

erosity and his gifts were legion; in return he asked only that they accord him a little hectic gaiety. But always when he tired of the game he would ring for Miss Knight and rest himself in her cool composure. Once, only once, he offered her a gift, and that time her blush went delicately down the backs of her ears and her curt refusal cut him to the heart. When he was ready to leave the hospital he bemoaned.

"How can I get along without all these cunning creatures? I have it, Bunny: I'll always keep a lesser nurse to wear the cap and bells. Thank God, there's still one legitimate way of having company. She must be good-looking and vivacious to qualify, and if I tire of one face I'll order another. What about it?"

"As you choose," was the unemotional response; "but they'll have to take their orders from me, unless, of course, you marry one, when I'll hand in my resignation."

"Good Lord," thought Jimmy, "when my poor Bunny dies there must certainly be an autopsy to find out whatever became of her sense of humor."

Nevertheless the crabbed suggestion stayed with him significantly. Marriage! He had hitherto been too occupied and too fickle to consider it seriously. Then, too, being one of the most eligible bachelors in town, his initiative had suffered. But all was changed now. He was damnable lonely and pathetically needful. A nurse less than any other sort of woman would be apt to feel revulsion toward a cripple, and, anyway, nurses were the only women he saw. His faithful Bunny was out of the question. As well warm up to a totem pole!

There had been a Miss O'Brien whom he had strongly fancied, and who, in turn, had made a great play for his affection. But it had been proved that Miss O'Brien was affianced to a young interne, and merely tolerating Taggard for the sake of the benefit accorded her.

And now, after a healing lapse of a

week, was come a second nurse, one chosen by the twinkling eye of Miss Godwin, the supervisor. Miss Godwin had known Taggard at the hospital and had since learned that his whims were as monstrous as his fortune. And combing among her candidates she had paused before Miss Lucy Smithers, and said "Ah!" inspiredly.

II

Of all the young women it had been her lot to handle, Miss Smithers was certainly the most difficult. She had not wanted to be a trained nurse, having a penchant toward the stage, and she revenged herself for the accident by taking all the liberties that she dared during her years of probation. She wore her hair bobbed and it was the color of pollen. Her mouth was curly and marred by no disfiguring intelligence, and she popularly enjoyed the reputation of being "a terror."

Miss Godwin, who was a firm believer in a mission designed for everyone, had been at a loss to point Miss Smithers' till she heard of Taggard's requirements. Judging from the amount of amusement which callow internes found in her, she was Heaven-ordained to tickle Adam's funnybone.

This audacious person, pink as a June rose and with yellow hair fluffed out beneath her muslin cap, would have walked unabashed into the presence of the Lord.

"Miss Smithers," announced Miss Knight in the same colorless voice with which she heralded his meals or his nap-hour, and though Jim, being sensitive to names, winced at the "Smithers," he was ready to be refreshed by the demure-eyed girl who sauntered in and regarded him fatalistically.

Miss Smithers saw a clean-cut man of about thirty-seven leaning forward in his wheel-chair and dominating the room with his nervous virility.

"Good morning," he said, with a rather charming inclination of the head. "I am glad that you have come.

Won't you sit? Ah, I see that you don't lower yourself down with your hands. That is gratifying. Miss Knight has told you, no doubt, that my requirements are particular, so you won't object if I ask a few questions."

Bobbed Hair sat and smoothed the velvet cover of the chair with sensuous appreciation of its texture.

"Not at all," said she, quite frankly pleased by the situation in which she found herself, the combination of a perfectly ducky apartment and a millionaire patient.

"Are you," began Taggard, "fond of the theatre?"

"Oh, yes, Mr. Taggard, I like it better than anything else. It has been said that I missed my vocation. I should have become an actress."

"Then you will be willing to see three plays a week for me. I think you cannot digest more. Remember it is I who am seeing them by proxy. I require someone who can remember the best songs and some of the jokes. Do you sing?"

"Do-re-me-fa," she dared, then cocked back her head and looked to see how he would take it. He took it amusedly.

"Not bad at all. And—er—have you any other name beside Smithers? One that won't slide off the tongue so annoyingly."

"Angelica," her smile acknowledged the humor of it as bestowed upon one whose eyes were imps of deviltry.

"Angelica," if you will permit me—another question. Do you know how to dress?"

"I am dressed," she said obtusely, and Taggard smiled.

"Not that way. While you are here you will discard your uniform. Miss Knight is my nurse. You will be my companion . . . my entertainer!"

"Not really?" she leaned forward boyishly. "I don't know what the supervisor would say to that, I'm sure. I'm supposed to be professionally employed."

"You are professionally employed. You're as necessary to my recovery as

the electric massage and strychnia. Just to look at you—at that extraordinary gold hair sends my mental barometer soaring. You're sure it isn't plated?"

"You mean peroxide? No, it grew like that. . . ."

"Pardon me," said Miss Knight at this juncture, putting her head in the door. "The tailor was here and I refused to pay him for the suit he ruined."

"That's nonsense. The poor chap must live, and if you don't pay him he'll bellow round all morning."

"He's already gone. I put him out."

"How—put him out?"

"I took him by the shoulders—he's not very big!"

Taggard laughed his tribute.

"Then why the interruption?"

"There's a straw suit-case here. I wanted to know if it belongs to Miss Smithers."

"A straw suit-case," shivered Jim fastidiously. "No, of course it isn't Miss Smithers'. It couldn't be!"

Miss Smithers was discomforted.

"Oh, but I'm afraid it is. It belonged to my sister in Arizona. It never rains in that country," and she hastened to reclaim it.

"She's a sunbeam," effused Jim to his dragon at the end of a week; "no—sunbeam's too wishy a word. She's a dynamo. I tell you, Bunny, that girl's got the stuff in her of a great little actress! A few good clothes make an astounding difference, don't you think?"

"I think," said Miss Knight, severely, yet straightening his pillow with a hand as light as love, "that if your pride would permit you to walk or to get out in the world you wouldn't need a vaudeville star to restore your health!"

"That shows what a cross-grained woman you are, Bunny! You know I can't get used to the idea of exposing the wreck of my poor person to the public gaze. I'd rather stay home with one sympathetic soul beside me—and that doesn't mean you," he added meaningly.

"Certainly not. I'm not in the least sorry for you. You're as robust as any other man and very badly spoiled in the bargain. There! In her bluff way she had made him exactly comfortable, had set his cigarette stand at his elbow, his magazines within reach, and now straightened, smiling. "Will you have milk or orange juice?"

"Neither," he begged incorrigibly. "I'll have whiskey and soda."

"Bad business! I'll make it milk just for punishment."

But even Miss Knight, who found nothing in Angelica of a helpmate and very little of the professional spirit, was prone to understand Taggard's growing infatuation. That girl was a witch! She would romp home from a play, rouse both Taggard and Miss Knight, and with inimitable spirit give them a résumé of the musical comedy she had attended. She could dance a little, could sing just well enough to get by, and had sufficient daring to be funny. Very soon she was adopting a manner of ridiculous patronage toward Taggard that would have been brazen had it not been so comic.

"Did his Grumpy scold and bully? Then his Angel will be good to him!" She would mince in with the morning mail on a silver tray, would feed him bonbons, would bring him a dish of fruit on her head, or a cigarette on a satin cushion; she taught his parrot to swear, she accepted the *carte blanche* that he gave her and stretched it to the limit, charging him with so many purchases that Nurse Knight was scandalized.

"It isn't right—it isn't decent," she objected, with a lift to her miraculously straight nose. "You're spoiling that girl, Mr. Taggard. How is she ever going back to nursing again?"

"I don't know, and I'm sure I don't care, Bunny! What good does my money do me, anyway? My friends don't give a whoop for me—that's been proven—not even enough to let me go on spending for them. As for you—"

She made a little sound of rebuff.

"Oh, you needn't take offense," he

interrupted crossly. "I was only going to suggest that you let me give you a new prayer book or an umbrella!"

The two women were as far apart as the poles. Angelica, the butterfly, was constitutionally unable to understand Nurse Knight, who toiled assiduously night and morn and burned the midnight oil over Jim's intricate accounts. She saw her ordering, directing the servants, dealing with tradesmen, preparing Jim's food the way he liked it, and thought.

"She's a regular machine. And here she might be working the easiest kind of graft."

III

Hour after hour Miss Knight listened to an inconsequential conversation between her patient and Angelica, and marked how the man who hid his sensitive horror of what had befallen him under the cloak of whimsicality made shy overtures to the small favorite. Only she who had shared his disappointments, his pain and disability for months could guess what finer substrata lay beneath his light exterior. She knew that, although Taggard's methods of seeking devotion were misguided, he was always hoping for some tangible and sustaining affection that should be his raft on the bewildering waters of life. She watched him grasping for straws, and sometimes she grew sick at the futility of his folly, grew sad at the childishness of his optimism.

Would he never learn that money buys nothing of value? When she pitied him most intensely she was always careful to be harsh, feeling in some blind way that her positive qualities must compensate for his weaker ones. Angelica she could not blame any more than you blame a derelict pussy loose in a dairy and lapping up all the cream in sight. And Taggard she did not blame simply because—he was Taggard. Each day now he would confide his innocent findings.

"Environment's a great molder, Bunny! Have you observed how easily

Angelica falls into the life of a lady?"

For once Miss Knight was taken unaware. It was late evening and she was helping Taggard make the difficult transition from his wheel chair to bed. Suddenly the great, richly paneled room with its exquisite furnishings, its high, carved bed and shrouded lamps stabbed her with an impression of the familiar thing, suddenly realized. It was his room, the room where his helpless fate had been involuntarily linked with hers.

Without being exactly conscious of it—she was always too busy for self-analysis—she had been happy in this room, happy in perhaps a deeper sense than is generally understood. She reviewed long hours of vigil beside him, quiet interludes spent with books of travel or adventure, she recalled his many beratings, his trying exactions, days when she had fought his disillusion with the strongest weapons she knew! She looked at him as he sat on the edge of his bed, a dressing-gown of dark blue silk half open across his throat, his face alight with this new enthusiasm and thought.

"He's bound to do it—he's bound to go from the frying pan into the fire. Then—I'll have to give up struggling for him—I'll probably never see this room again."

Cold with a fear of self-revelment, she hastily set out his night things and withdrew. Almost like a girl she fled to her room, passing Angelica's open door as she did so and glimpsing the favorite lounging luxuriously on her bed with a box of bonbons, a horrible example of what money and misdirected kindness can do to destroy stamina.

She closed her own door and stood trembling beside her dressing-table. She was only two years the senior of that pampered young creature who was enjoying the bachelor's bounty and who would most probably become his wife. She examined her face anxiously and noted that it was paler than usual, that there were faint circles of fatigue beneath her eyes; not fatigue,

perhaps, but the mark of some more wearing exaction. She remembered Angelica's babyish hair, and pulled the pins hastily from her own, letting it fall about her shoulders, thick and softening, the color of leaf mold in a forest pool. He might see that her hair was beautiful, too, if she chose to let him. But Nurse Knight's instinct was to hide, always to hide what was beautiful about her, even when it was only her feelings.

The sudden ringing of the night bell set her nerves jangling. She had never kept Jim waiting, and now she twisted up her hair, wiped her eyes and marched in. Taggard was in bed when she opened the door of the big room, but the light from one remaining lamp threw a pallor across him.

"What do you mean by leaving me like that?" he asked irritably. "You know I have to be read to sleep. . . ."

"I've been thinking," she said with a face as guileless as a May day, "that it might be well for you to break in Angelica. The fact is, Mr. Taggard, I've decided to take a vacation as soon as it is convenient for you to let me go. . . ."

"Vacation?" He propped himself erect in bed, as though such a thing had never been heard of. "You're joking!"

She stood stiffly at the foot of his bed, her hands clasped before her.

"I find that I'm tired out. I'm having headaches."

"Not really? What a brute I am not to have noticed! But what's to become of me?"

The selfish note of dependence ran through her like a tremor.

"Miss Smithers is a graduate nurse. You forget she came in that capacity."

He drew a troubled hand through his hair.

"I confess I had forgotten! But she's so young, Bunny, so inexperienced—"

"She's only two years younger than I!"

"Is it pos—" He closed his lips. "Then you're twenty-seven, Bunny."

S. Set—Mar.—5

Why, you're just a child yourself—"

She turned aside her head, feeling his gaze suddenly aware.

"But who'll run the establishment; who'll pay the bills and—and—"

"Miss Smithers can do all that gradually. I'll teach her. . . ."

"I see. . . ." He accustomed himself slowly. "And will you stay until we're sure things have adjusted themselves?"

"I'll stay till all the wheels are turning," she promised with a slight smile, though her heart was cold. "Now shall I send Miss Smithers—"

But at the door he made another detaining gesture.

"Oh, Bunny, I—that is, if you please, I should like to give you quite a magnificent vacation." In the pale light she saw that, remembering her many rebuffs, he was flushing sensitively. "Would you let me take care of all that for you, or is it too much to grant a mere patient?"

Her corner of the room was dark, and he could not see the large tear that overflowed one eye.

"There's no reason," pursued Taggard's voice, "why you should not visit one of the Bahamas that we've been reading about, or any other place of interest. At any rate, will you consider letting me send you?"

Her answer was a long time coming, and it impressed him as being curiously muffled.

"Perhaps," was what she said.

Five minutes later Angelica was standing beside his bed, uniformed and questioning.

"Miss Knight told me to put this on," she said, a thought sullenly. "Am I taking orders from her or from you?"

Taggard saw the droop of her mouth and condoned her childish temper.

"I never issue orders to people I'm fond of. I prefer to make requests. Angelica," savoring the novelty of the news, "you're to be my nurse while poor Grumpy takes a rest. How does that strike you? Do you think you can limit your horizons again—for my sake?"

He saw her breast rising and falling, the deliberate curb that she held on herself. She was evidently fumbling for words of assent that should carry conviction. But looming colossally were the tasks she had seen Miss Knight perform, the vision of that responsible figure bending over a desk till late at night, the image of Miss Knight assuming all disagreeable obligations with uncomplaining efficiency. And Angelica, who for the first time in her life had tasted freedom, quailed. The play-time was ended and she was sufficiently keen to know that one may qualify as a companion much easier than as a goddess of the domestic machine.

"Oh," she said brokenly, "do you think I ever could?"

"That depends on your strength of purpose."

Immediately he had said it he knew she was not strong, that in his fatuous need of something soft and lovable he had not wanted her to be strong. She picked up the book beside his bed and took Miss Knight's accustomed seat.

"I'll—I'll try," she quavered and began to read.

Curious the difference that the mere donning of that uniform brought about. Whereas their relationship had been one of easy give and take, of flirtatious banter, now a real constraint lay between them. Taggard, being the finer, sensed it first, and Angelica, feeling it in him, was troubled. It is the unwritten law that dignity must exist between a nurse and a patient. Her reading was not the most successful performance in the world. She was jumpy and uncertain, she slurred over sentences and pronounced abominably, so that at the end of fifteen minutes his nerves were rasping. Finally she stopped altogether.

"I don't see how anyone can get round those Hindu names for places and things. Anyway, it's awfully dry, don't you think? Shan't I try a novel?"

"No," he said almost in exasperation, "I'll try to sleep now, if you will fix the windows right." And when,

after much directing, she achieved the technique of proper ventilation, he relented of his impatience. "Angelica, you've been such a sporting playmate that I know you ought to make a bully nurse. Only, I'm cantankerous and used to Bunny's ways. We'll have to be patient with one another."

"All right," she agreed; "only I guess Grumpy was right, Mr. Taggard. I guess I am spoiled for usefulness."

"Nonsense," he said. "Good-night, now. Waken me at eight, please. And pleasant dreams to you!"

But Angelica's dreams were not pleasant. To have her Arabian Nights experience so rudely interrupted was a jolt, and she blamed Miss Knight for deliberate conspiracy against her. Taggard had adored her in her frivolous capacity, her talent for keeping him amused had amounted to genius, and there were the gifts, the theatres, the pretty dresses, which she had felt herself free to enjoy. And now to go back to nursing, especially to follow in the footsteps of that cold automaton, Beatrice Knight, who was so familiar with his likes and dislikes as to be almost a part of him—it wasn't fair!

Next day when the doctor, a celebrated practitioner with a keen weather eye, called for his usual remonstrance with Taggard's shut-in policy, he absorbed the situation. Miss Knight, the unappreciated, was about to abandon him to the mercies of the girl whom, at the hospital, he had heard called a "baby vamp." As he was leaving.

"You'll walk," he said, cryptically, "as soon as your conceit will let you. But I doubt, my dear chap, if you'll ever be able to see!"

IV

Now, what the deuce had he meant by that, wondered Taggard, who could not see what the departure of Miss Knight or any other circumstance of his disability had to do with a lack of discernment. He sought to capture the elusive meaning and failed.

In the meantime the consciousness

that Miss Knight was packing affected him oddly. He wanted the poor girl to go, he told himself persistently, and yet deep at the bottom of his heart was a mortal resentment. In the room where he spent most of his time he could hear her comings and goings in the corridor, even the arrival of the wardrobe trunk which she had purchased and had sent home from the store.

He sat always in an attitude of acute listening, yet was annoyed if anyone remarked on his tension. It would seem that at least she might show a little human interest by coming in. But no, she was instructing her understudy and she preferred to remain behind the scenes. So Angelica, or Miss Smithers, as she had now automatically become for him, played her feeble rôle, and Taggard in frank ennui yawned and listened. He could not endure Angelica's milk punches or the doubtful delicacies which she half-heartedly prepared, and the readings had been abandoned altogether. He wished that they might recapture the first fine careless spirit they had known, but the sight of her uniform set a barrier. She was pining for her lost freedom, and a great dullness lay between them.

Angelica, no less than he, looked in dread toward Miss Knight's departure, and at last, the ill humor of each aggravated by the little rubs of day by day, the word of discontent was spoken, and once spoken could not be unsaid.

"It's no use," Angelica burst out, after a rumpus with the cook audible even to Taggard in his sanctum, "I can't step into Grumpy's shoes. I—I don't want to, anyway. Nursing is bad enough, but having to shoulder the whole responsibility is another. You'll have to find someone else, Mr. Taggard."

Taggard looked at her almost with pathos.

"I'm an unutterable crank as a sick man," he declared, "and I'm a poor executive when it comes to bossing servants. There was never any system

here till Bunny made one. And now that she's going I don't see what they'll do unless you stick. I've tried to give you a good time because they're few enough in anyone's life, and, in turn, won't you—won't you stand by me?"

In her eyes, shallow as brookside violets, was a veiled antagonism. She burst into defiant tears.

"It isn't as though your money wouldn't get you anything you need. You can have fifty nurses from the hospital tomorrow. . . . I did like it when I could do as I pleased, but—I simply hate responsibility."

He looked at her with a sudden sobering of the mouth, a stricken appeal of the eyes. He supposed he had been a bit smitten with her just at first, a bit hopeful of her always. She was so young and pretty and so—breakable. That was just the word, "breakable." The first touch of responsibility had broken her, and he saw her now like Humpty Dumpty, in pieces, and knew no way of putting her together again.

"Angelica," he said queerly, "are you, too, going?"

But she only covered her face and fled from him, and he heard her desperately seeking cover in her room, sniffing loudly like a healthy, outraged child. Then little sounds of fevered activity, then someone treading the corridor on tiptoe and the secret closing of a door. Darkness deepened in the mellow room where there was only a grate fire from which to draw the illusion of cheer, and Taggard's head was wedded to his bosom. He scarcely heard Miss Knight when she entered, once more heavenly in white after many days. A fragrance of soothing seemed to come with her, spices and ointment for his wounds which were many. And in his spent gratitude he forgot to wonder why she had put on the uniform again for so short a while.

"Miss Smithers has gone," she said to him, and her voice ran as smoothly as a sleigh. "So, if you'll let me, I'll help you to bed. . . ."

She very carefully did not see his expression when he lifted a haggard

head, too sad even for irony, but she must have smiled inwardly at the way he lent himself to her ministrations. And presently they were again in their old accustomed rôles, Taggard against his pillows and Miss Knight seated in the warm aureole of the lamp.

He lay for a long time, embarrassed by the knowledge that they held between them, the knowledge of his desertion, his continuous desertions. Then, slowly, he forgot to be ashamed. He was concentrating his faculties upon that halved head with eyes gently downcast like those of a saint—not a canonized one, to be sure, but a woman compounded of love and charity and a tiny, guarded sense of fun. He had at last discovered her deliciousness, and he was strangely moved by his discovery, thrillingly elate. It was as though in the realization of her he beheld beauty's ingrained pattern standing clear of the warp of life. And though the extreme conception might fade, he had seen what he had seen.

He started, half ashamed of his emotion.

He remembered that she was but twenty-seven years old, and something whispered that she had tricked him. If she had concealed her beauty it was that its power might be potent. If she

had let him think that she had no sense of humor it was but to perpetrate more neatly her little tricks. There had been Miss O'Brien whose testing she had accomplished, and Angelica whose loyalty she had disproved. And now there was no further mention of a vacation. Would a wholly disinterested woman have acted in this way?

A slow smile tugged at his lips, but even as he smiled he felt on them the taste of salt. By George, he knew what the doctor meant now, all right. He had sought weakly, desperately, to be salvaged by a woman's love and there it had been under his eyes from the beginning. Pity the blind!

She was sitting contentfully in the low chair beside him, just as she had always sat. He rubbed his eyes.

"And so they go!" he remarked suddenly with a great show of indifference. "I suppose you'll be the next?"

"I?" she countered. "Oh, no, I think not!" and she picked up the book of travel with brave composure.

He closed his eyes for the more delicious sense of her, near, loving, yet hiding her love. He gave no sign of guessing her secret. For a little he wanted to live in the security of it.

"Shall I," she asked demurely the old question, "go on from where we left off?"



WHEN a man looks thoughtful, the natural query is, What is he thinking about? When a woman looks thoughtful, the query is, Whom is she thinking about?



THE trouble with marriage is that there is a whole lot of initiative, but no referendum.



The Higher Learning in America

V

The University of Michigan

By G. D. Eaton

I

IT is a source of regret to me that I cannot give a picture of the University of Michigan that was. It comes to me only in a fragmentary way, in scattered legends from the townfolk. I don't say that the university was then better or worse, but somehow I regret the passing of the time when men kicked freely over the traces; somehow or other I regret the passing of the days when Ann Arbor was filled with young, hedonic devils, when today's high-school marking system was unknown, when Hallowe'en found the wooden sidewalks burning in the roads, when the unpopular freshman was thrown into a mudhole about where the big library now stands.

Once a poverty-stricken freshman pleaded that the suit he had on was all that he possessed in the way of clothes. Swash! And he went into the slimy hole where the biologists collected Protozoa. Afterward the persecutors took up a collection so that the victim could buy a new suit.

My second-story room was once inhabited by a husky young fellow whose bed was on the floor above. He was accustomed to undress in the room below, to put on his pajamas, and then, instead of going up the stairs, to swing himself out of the window which faces the street, and climb up over the roof ledge into his dormer sleeping room.

In this house, before there was segregation of the sexes, both men and

women had rooms. They were trusted not to bring "dishonor" upon the host, and they never did. There used to be the great fun of the fellows and girls locking each other in their rooms just before classes. The girls once had to slide down the clothes chute in order to get to an examination, and as in joke books and vaudeville, the fat girl was stuck.

I never read any of Jack London's adventure books without thinking of the days when the saloons in the "downtown" section of Ann Arbor were brightly lighted, with tangy, musky, wet smells exuding every time the swinging doors flew open. Inside was the roaring of song, or resonant voices rich in laughter; inside men sat over their beer and carved huge initials in the table tops. They swore great Viking oaths, with black threats at the team that was to meet the Varsity on Saturday coming. Had a professor flunked one of them on a "bluebook"? Well, the professor could go to hell! The unfortunate one would drink deep and say he didn't give a damn about the professor. And often enough he didn't.

Once a pet squirrel, grown overfat and sluggish from too many tidbits, was run over on the streets. With much pomp and trappings a funeral was staged.

There was a little restaurant here—Tuttle's—where a gray-bearded old man trusted everyone, where bills became enormous, where bookkeeping was unknown, where girl students did not

enter, though they were not forbidden. The old man used to boast that he never lost a cent. If the fellows went away without paying they sent the money from home.

It was the same at "Pop" Bancroft's place. He, too, trusted the men in a free and large way.

Today the students' fear of the police is laughable. At one time they feared nothing; they were ever ready for a row and were seldom worsted. But once they did not come out on the top side. There was a circus in town and nearly all the men in the university meekly paid admission to the stand, laughing in their sleeves at the fun to come. The ring-master tried to stop the hoots with which every act was greeted. He appealed to their sense of honor, their respectability, their intelligence as college men, their honor as Christians and gentlemen. He was derided for his pains. Suddenly a number of horses were trotted into the ring, hitched to chains, and cracked with whips. The whole stand went down and then nearly a hundred roustabouts with clubs charged the struggling, surprised students. Never, in the history of the university, had they suffered such an overwhelming defeat.

Yet it must not be presumed that Ann Arbor was rowdy. I am informed, on the contrary, by those whose word I can trust, that the community was very friendly, and in the main, peaceable and serious. The outbreaks were sporadic. None the less, at uncertain intervals, the whole student body welcomed the chance of a row.

It is a little sad, a little hard to realize that these Hyperborean spirits are now staid, gray headed, Puritanical outwardly, predatory inwardly, bereft of the fine carelessness of youth. For the most part they are intolerant, comic-sheet characters boasting of their college days and doing their most to keep their sons, now on the campus, along the Christian path of high endeavor.

Times have changed. The saloon is replaced by the Michigan Union, the men-students' club, a big building,

hotel-like inside. In the basement there is a travesty of a bar, where sweetish, sickening, pallid drinks are served. In one corner of this "taproom" strident jazz emanates from a mechanical piano. The table tops are still being carved, but often the initials appear in a feminine scroll instead of in the old huge, square-cut letters. Overhead the table tops from a defunct and traditionally glorious saloon are screwed to the ceiling. Once in a great while a blithe spirit enters with a quart and mixes his own drinks at one of the tables.

Old Man Tuttle has passed away and the new restaurant bearing his name sees far more girls than men; the cash register glitters ironically over the counter. "Pop" Bancroft has passed away as well, and his restaurant, as it stands today, is a combination of eating place and something else, I forget what—a grocery store perhaps.

But there still are places where a man may go with empty pockets, breathe a word into the proprietor's ear, and receive a hearty, "Sure! When you get it. That's all right." "Rex's," "Hep's," "Jack's!"

II

THE glint of the sun on the windows of the Michigan Union, the worn, wooden steps of West Hall, the faded blue dome of University Hall, the porcine pillars of Memorial Hall, the ochrous, red-brick Tappan Hall, the ornamental boulders carved with class dates, the class trees, the class benches, all give me a musty foreboding that makes the rush of feet and voices unutterably sad. An old professor with a cynical but kindly droop to his mouth watched a laughing group pour out of a building. "My God! The pity of it!" I heard him say. Then he added, "If I weren't such a damned coward I'd shoot myself."

The stately Tudor building, Martha Cook dormitory, one of the three for girls, is almost across from the president's home. I wonder sometimes if

that house is as garishly furnished as the two reception rooms on the first floor of the dormitory. How many girls, I ask myself, are there in Martha Cook dormitory? How many atoms of potential unhappiness, inarticulate romance, sophistry, trustfulness, skepticism? It interests me far more than calculus; it is more indeterminate.

Ann Arbor is a beautiful place, the most pleasing town that I have ever been in. It lies on an old glacial plateau surrounded by morainal hills, some steep, precipitous, some sloping with a pure Hogarthian line of beauty. Along the steeper side the Huron River winds, and across the river are other hills equally steep and a little higher, an excellent vantage point from which to view Ann Arbor, either green in summer, or slate-grey and white in winter.

For the most part, the streets are wide and beautiful, marked by pretentious fraternity houses here and there. There are thousands of trees. From the Michigan Union tower one can scarcely see the town on account of them. I like especially the yellow glare of the maples in autumn along south University avenue. And I like the great clumps of lavender that the lilac bushes make on the lawn of the Union in the springtime.

III

THE publications of the university are interesting despite the vapidly enforced by a cautious, grandmotherly faculty. First and foremost is the *Michigan Daily*. I am forced to laugh at its flabby editorials—pitiful attempts to recall the old swashbuckling spirit which fled as college men became younger, more impressionable, more easily dominated by Puritan zealots, more easily guarded by pedantic Sir Hudson Lowes, strait-laced and afraid of the state. The *Daily* furnishes news, however, campus, local and national, with a fair amount of accuracy and judgment of news values.

In fact, the young men on the staff

do wonderfully well, considering the obstacles. There is an iron hand gripping the paper at all times. Once, when a fiery old science professor launched into a blistering article against the oratory department, there was quite a scene at the *Daily* office. The article went into print and half the run was made when the faculty guardian angel, somehow or other, caught sight of the sheet. At two o'clock in the morning the jaded staff was filling the hole with clippings from Detroit papers.

The *Gargoyle* is the humor magazine and is issued each month during the school year. When it becomes satiric, in its veiled way, at the expense of local institutions, or when it burlesques local idiots and idiocies, it is enjoyable, but most of the time it is tame enough and no better than *Life* or *Judge*. I doubt if it is as good.

The *Michigan Chimes*, also issued monthly, is thoroughly lack-lustre. It publishes the worst stories ever written. It contains stuffy articles by stuffy alumni, advice from self-made Michigan men, ponderous, unreadable stuff from the local savants, praise of poor books of fiction written by graduates. It is, in fact, no good at all.

Whimsies, a "purely literary" publication brought out every two months, was started more than a year ago by five girls. It came out first in mimeographed form and carried no names. It had a mysterious post office box number and it caused much wondering. While incognito it received a deal of advertising from the staff of the rhetoric department. Then, after two mimeographed issues, a twain of rhetoric professors arranged with a local publisher to have it printed. In spite of all these machinations of the rhetoric department the publication claims to be "completely free from academic influence." This year it has dropped its faculty adviser and there are both men and women on the staff. It has turned out some surprisingly good verse, but its prose is among the worst to be found; essays in the manner of amateur Deep Think-

ers, idiotic fairy tales, and an occasional Victorian, invertebrate story.

The *Michiganensian*, the annual, is too much like all college annuals to deserve any mention.

The alumnus magazine is completely stodgy, gossipy; a sort of country newspaper social column misplaced.

There are a number of other periodicals of technical trend, of academies, associations and faculty cliques. They may be interesting to their respective groups but very little that is worth while in a general way is to be found in them.

IV

THERE are so many clubs, organizations and fraternities at Ann Arbor that almost anyone may belong to something or other, once the Freshman year is past. Personally, I am the only one, so far as I know, who does not belong to any.

I have no grudge against the fraternities; they are generally peopled with the brainiest, most agreeable, most convivial students on the campus. I am welcomed at a number of them through my friends. The other clubs and associations, so far as I can see, are almost completely silly. Almost all of them are faculty run. In fact, one of them, Stylus, a girls' literary organization, recruits its members at the recommendation of the rhetoric faculty. Everywhere one goes on the campus one sees or hears something of these associations: debating societies, a philosophy society, honor societies, three veterans' organizations, a half dozen literary societies, engineering societies, societies apparently without purpose, societies *ad infinitum*.

Athletics seem to be on the wane, perhaps due to the fading ruggedness of spirit and freedom among the students, perhaps due to the fact that the university's former pride, the football team, no longer conquers everything before it.

Still, there is considerable interest in the games. At the only game that I ever attended there were over thirty-

five thousand spectators. I did not enjoy it myself, but the picture was amazing. After the first quarter I looked at masses rather than individuals, the clumps of struggling men, the blotches of color in the stands. I wondered why the bands were there. When they played, the cheer leaders kept the stands in an uproar and if the bands were capable of making music they were not heard. I wondered at the cheers. A man in back of me kept yelling "Touchdown Michigan!" even into the last quarter, when Michigan was thoroughly beaten and far from its goal. Somehow this whole spectacle struck me as pathetic. Here was a mass of human beings, some thirty-five thousand, in violent accord—and over what?

The game ended.

It was lost. The members of the band brought by the opposing team turned their hats backward, struck up a tune, and marched from the field along with the spectators, stiff from sitting three hours on the cold concrete stands. For a few days there were cries of "Another coach!" and then all was quiet again. Banners and bunting went down until the next game.

V

SEVERAL times I have said that there has been a change of spirit at Michigan. I may have been arbitrary, but I think not. What the townspeople tell me certainly justifies what I have said. I glean this from the *Chicago Graphic* of April 4, 1891:

Regarded from the standpoint of the student, life at the University of Michigan is characterized by a freedom and simplicity such as few colleges can offer. There are no dormitories, no prizes, no markings in the classroom, no compulsory attendance at chapel, no attempt to regulate habits or associations. The student is treated as a citizen and is left to manage his own private affairs to suit himself. He is accountable to the university only for his studies.

The only thing in all this that now holds true is that there is not compulsory attendance at chapel (I am grate-

ful for even this little), although every student is bombarded by religious circulars. After reading the article I conclude that either the writer was drunk or that times have greatly changed.

We now have dormitories (for women), scholarships, prizes, markings in the classroom, a Dean of Men, a Dean of Women, countless committees to regulate housing, organizations, attendance. We have student councils and committees to regulate what the faculty has left. The student cannot even leave the room he rents without the consent of either the landlady or the Dean of Men, or both. The men are left some freedom, but not the girls.

The community has resurrected a State cigarette law that has been a dead letter for a number of years, and now the student who is under twenty-one cannot buy cigarettes.

The library administration is ridiculously childish about putting books on the reserve shelves! "Madame Bovary," the Decameron, books by Havelock Ellis, Schnitzler's "Reigen," Cabell's "Jurgen," even Frank Norris's "Vandover and the Brute." Nevertheless the university library is one of the few in the country that has Dreiser's complete works, though to be sure, such naughty volumes as "The Genius" and "The Hand of the Potter" are on the reserved list. Anything risqué is reserved for the faculty.

So far as I can determine, the old university traditions are losing ground. About all that is left is the Baccalaureate service, a parade of caps and gowns, a sonorous speech or two. Traditionally I find nothing to distinguish a Michigan man from any other American college student. The songs, old and new, persist, but they are rarely sung. At a "sing meet" of the seniors last spring there were not three hundred present, seniors and audience. Formerly the whole school turned out.

There is still an evening called "Swing Night" when various fraternity men fight to have their swings represented in certain campus trees, a tame

and half-hearted affair. There is Cap Night near the end of the school year, when the freshmen throw their peculiar headgear into a blazing bonfire. This is largely attended, speeches are made, the various classes yell themselves hoarse in self-praise. Formerly the freshmen were roughly handled, but not so now. The Detroit newspapers took it up, the home folks became indignant, and the affair almost got into the governor's platform on his re-election.

There are still Pep Meetings to encourage the team, still a parade once in a while, but they attract little attention. If a Michigan man must be distinguished from other college men it will be by his lack of traditions, his lack of the thing called "school spirit." Perhaps it is a good thing. Nevertheless it is strange that a university founded so long ago as 1837 should not cherish some peculiar ceremonial or custom.

VI

If there remains anything exceptional about the University of Michigan student body it is to be found among the women. Never before have I found so many women who talk intelligently about things that would curdle the blood of a Sunday school superintendent.

The girls, indeed, seem to be far shrewder than the men. They have a finer skepticism about religion, happiness, love. They see marriage (and say so to anyone impersonally interested), not as an affair of romance, but as a solution of economic difficulties. But they have no freedom left to them; they are far worse off than the men. Michigan is a State university and the taxpayers insist on a rigid discipline for their daughters. The dormitories and league-houses are closed at ten-thirty or eleven, except on dance nights, Friday and Saturday, and then the girls are given a longer time only for the express purpose of dancing!

Cigarettes are taboo. Expulsion follows when a girl is caught smoking, yet

the vast majority of them do smoke—secretly, of course. Anything untoward elicits a summons from the Dean of Women. Not long ago one of the girls started to wear knickerbockers, but as she was the only one thus dressed on the campus she was requested, "as a personal favor" to the Dean of Women—it is always as a personal favor, which is none the less relentless—not to dress in that fashion any longer. It probably cost the girl a pretty penny to discard her new habit and buy another.

But the question of women leads me to a half tradition which I have overlooked. Surviving today is the resentment of the men at woman's invasion of the campus. It takes the form of a mild ostracism of the women students from social affairs promoted by the men; certain fraternities even forbid their members to be seen with women students. But observance of this is less than half-hearted and the men who talk loudest against the women are generally those forced out in competition or those too invertebrate to defy fraternity rulings. I know of one case where two men were calling on the same girl, one a member of a fraternity that did not rule against it and the other a member of a fraternity that did, rigorously. So the latter associated himself with the former and the two saw the girl together. One man was nominally visiting the other. This case I thought to be rather unique at the time, but I found later that it was not uncommon.

The students in Ann Arbor amuse themselves much like any other American students. They seek the dance halls, the billiard rooms, the moving picture shows. Then there is the co-operative pleasure known as "fussing." Occasionally one may find a game going on in some of the students' rooms, but gambling is not general. Quantities of bootleg whisky, beer, wine and hard cider are at all times available for those who know the ropes.

Various sports help to relieve the tedium and monotony of study. I observe that in summer, tennis is most popular. In the winter a large number

of men and women pack skis and go to the hills. Horseback riding is becoming increasingly popular, so much so that a school for riding has been recently established.

But most of the diversion, unless I am mistaken, comes in the form of the students visiting each other, "dropping in" or "dropping up." In seasonable weather the Boulevard, a winding road through the steep hills, and the Gardens, which this road wends through, provide delightful places to stroll, and parties of men, of women, of men and women, take advantage of the fact.

Because of the waning of the tradition that Michigan men are not to be seen with women, and because the men far outnumber the women, Ypsilanti, which is about nine miles from Ann Arbor, is very popular. The State normal school is there. This institution is largely attended by girls, and so Ypsilanti is largely frequented by Ann Arbor men.

VII

Not much can be said for the buildings in Ann Arbor, either on the campus or off. Except for Martha Cook dormitory, Memorial Hall, the new library, and possibly the Michigan Union building, all the structures on the campus are utilitarian and ugly.

Martha Cook is done in Tudor fashion and is remarkably good both outside and in, except for the hideous way in which its two big rooms on the first floor are begawded. These, the Blue Room and the Red Room, are decorated respectively with blue and red hangings, quasi coats of arms, and ugly lamp standards. The upholstery conforms to the color scheme, except that the chair and divan (sparking bench) arms are quite frowsy and worn. But the building is easily the best in Ann Arbor.

Memorial Hall, as its name suggests, was erected in honor of the Michigan dead. It is a solid two-story structure with pillars the full length in front. The pillars are homely enough. The

building is of Berean sandstone and inside it has a veneer of marble. On the lower floors are a few statues and a few casts, one being an exceedingly corpulent former governor of the State. Above are more, and in addition, three rooms which hold a number of pictures. Occasionally some very fine collections are exhibited.

The new library, except for the front of it, is factory-like in appearance and only a spread of steps and the portal save the front from looking like the rest of it. Within, the study rooms are wide and spacious, with very good cast friezes. The lower corridor is decorated in a silly fashion, after the Pompeian style, with a blatant color scheme. On the second floor an immense reading room, with end murals by Gary Melchers, is very attractive and imposing. The building contains over four hundred thousand volumes, and though it was but very recently built it is fast becoming too small for the university's needs.

The Michigan Union building is not very imposing, outside or in. Chiefly I like its upper, towered contour in the evening dusk. I like also its green lawn, which is not very large, with its shrubbery and lilac bushes. Inside, as I have said, it is hotel-like. Only the main dining-room and the ballroom please me. A similar structure is being planned for the women students.

A number of fraternity houses are agreeable in outward aspect, but I find that most of them are shabby and inartistic inside. Of the more than a score that I have visited only one (on Forest Avenue) suits, from the inside, my aesthetic prejudices. I like this particular place for its system of interior pillars and balconies, done in white; but I like it more because of several delightful men therein.

I wonder if the sorority houses are better decorated. Some of them are pleasing enough from the outside.

VIII

THE rest of the picture is typical—typical not only of the Middle Western

university, but of all the great American schools. I give it as I see it; a seething mass of students whose ambitions far overrun their abilities, a flicker of genius here and there, a bit of bubbling protoplasm in the midst of inert cartilage; professors, for the most part silly and idealistic, professors who know only too little of their own fields—notably those of the literary departments—blazing into the strange and terrifying fields of others and invariably making asses of themselves; professors of mathematics stopping the binomial theorem to gabble of metaphysics; professors of sociology giving strange impressions of Einstein; here and there a professor with a cynical, sullen face; now and then a professor who shocks and pains the assembled dears who sit before him; and very rarely, a professor with a sunny Epicurean smile, playing the hypocrite and laughing about it when he is with his intimates.

A vast panorama; the president bleating about the glory of service and advising everyone to go to church on Sunday; rhetoric instructors condemning Dreiser and praising F. Marion Crawford; art instructors claiming that the study of art is a science; sociology instructors damning Nietzsche; philosophy instructors lauding Berkeley; history instructors eulogizing Gladstone and traducing Bismarck and Machiavelli; journalism instructors saying that the Hearst papers invariably carry the preponderance of advertising in their respective centers; oratory instructors praising Bryan and denouncing Ingersoll. And so on endlessly.

But I must not be unfair. Occasionally, in the "cultural" courses, I have met instructors and professors who have tunneled through the great mass of fallacies to the truth. A professor in ancient history, for example, sees Aratus, not as the prototype of a Chatauqua George Washington, but as a schemer, coward and demagogue. The foreign language teachers, having absorbed, consciously or unconsciously, something of real culture, despair now and then of cramming conjugations,

reflexives and ethical datives into the heads of the students and stop to lecture in English on some one of the seven arts.

In the science departments there is a healthy pessimism that deals a sad blow to the moralists and idealists. Pained disbelief runs through many of the students as man is shown to be drifting to extinction, as drifted the cephalopods, the Dinichthys and the poor old Stegosaurus stenops.

It is in the science departments that I have found the instructors most ready to meet the student as man to man. It is these instructors who show genuine delight in, who offer hours of their time to, the intelligent young man or woman who shows intellectual curiosity, to the young man or woman who has ceased to babble of the soul, and who can see beauty in the colloidal complex mixture that is man, to the young man or woman who finds something vastly more appealing in the law of gravitation, than in the Book of Revelations.

Outside of the foreign language departments I find that the men of science are almost alone in appreciation of good literature. While the fossils of the other departments are still singing the psalms of the Victorians, the men of science are reading Gorky, Anatole France, Conrad and Cabell. In brief, they are not only alert in their own fields, but they surpass many of the "cultural" pedagogues in theirs.

Generally speaking, the students are a delight and a despair to anyone who is unprejudiced. At times, when the

odor of unwashed humanity, powerful, penetrating, nauseating, has irritated me in the class rooms, I have damned the whole lot without reserve, but when all is said and done, there is something beautifully pathetic about most of them.

I have talked daily to poor devils who could not write a decent sentence, who worshipped Zane Grey and found Conrad dull, and who intended to make a living at writing. I have seen young men and women in love, looking forward to graduation day, marriage, and great careers, when both have been so stupid that they could hardly struggle through the baby play of the curriculum.

There are other students, family wonders and the pride of many professors. They stop just a little short of having real intelligence and yet, like Ibsen's pitiful Brand, they want "all or nothing"—and it is nothing that they are doomed to get.

Yet, at times, I grow downright maudlin as I consider this place. A pride wells up in me. I feel, when I should know that my feeling is biased, that the University of Michigan is surely superior to the rest in that it has among the students a small group of skeptics, agnostics, majestic young doubters. When I consider these young fellows; when I consider our midnight discussions, our giggles at the pedants and hundred-per-centers, our lively rows over things literary, our bibbing of forbidden drinks, I am grateful to the University of Michigan for having brought us together.



WOMEN are the wild life of a country. Morality corresponds to game laws.



Winkelburg

By Ben Hecht

I

THERE was never a man as irritating as Winkelburg. He was an encyclopedia of misfortunes. Everything that can happen to a man had happened to him. He had lost his family, his money and his health. He was, in short, a man completely broken—tall, thin, with a cadaverous face out of which shone two huge lustreless eyes. He walked with an angular crawl that reminded one of the emaciated flies one sees at the beginning of winter. That was Winkelburg to a dot—a creature perversely alive, dragging itself across an illimitable expanse of flypaper.

It was one of Winkelburg's worst habits to appear at unexpected moments. But, perhaps, any appearances he might have made would have had this irritating quality of unexpectedness. One was never looking forward to him, and thus the sight of his wan, uncomfortable smile, his lustreless eyes, his tenacious crawl was invariably an irritating surprise.

I will be frank. It was Winkelburg's misfortune which first attracted me. I listened to his story avidly. He talked in slow words and there was intelligence in the man. He was able to perceive himself, not only as a pain-racked, starving human, but he glimpsed with his large, tired eyes his relation to things outside himself.

It appeared that the man had been lying in a hall bedroom for two weeks dying. An embittered landlady to whom he owed three months rent had tended him. I fancy she was torn between a hope that the miserable fool

would die and give her a chance to rent the room to a more profitable customer and a more optimistic greed. He might recover, get a job and pay her the three months rent he owed.

Winkelburg wrote to me about it. It was my first knowledge of the man. He offered his experiences as material for one of the daily stories I was writing for the *News*. His letter was a document. In it he recounted in good English and in a few lines the history of his life.

"I have had hard luck all my life," he wrote. "I have no friends or relatives. My health is broken and I am without money. I once was somebody, but that doesn't matter now. I am dying. Lying up here in my room and hearing the noises in the street all day and all night I got to thinking about things. I don't mind dying, but to die all alone in a cheap bedroom with nobody around is too much. So I got dressed. It took me almost all day to dress on account of the pain. I had twenty cents left. I finally managed to walk out of the house and get on a street car. It was a torture. But I figured if I could reach the County Hospital they would put me in a bed and give me treatment, and, anyway, it would not be so bad to die in a hospital."

Then he went on to relate his experience. He had arrived at the hospital and been ushered into a receiving room. Here a group of internes stood around cracking jokes. One of them finally advised him to take his clothes off. He retired into one of the booths and stripped. When he came out the room was empty. So Winkelburg crawled

up on a dirty table and lay there waiting. He waited for an hour. After an hour an interne popped into the room and looked at him with some surprise and inquired what the devil he was doing lying naked on the table. Winkelburg, more dead than alive, moaned something in reply. Whereupon the interne examined him. Winkelburg wrote:

"He moved my legs up and down and felt over me for a minute and then said, 'You're all right. I'll give you a prescription to fix you up.' And he wrote out a prescription. I put my clothes on slowly and asked him what I should do. 'Go home,' he said. I told him I couldn't. Then he asked, 'Well, how did you come here?' I told him it was a torture. So he grinned and said, 'Torture back, then.' I am back in my room now in bed. I feel worse. I've been thinking about all this. It doesn't make me angry. The world is like that. It has no time for its unfortunates. There are too many healthy ones to take care of. This interne was possibly not a bad fellow. When he talked to me I realized how it was. I was just one of a thousand poor fools, and he was busy with his career and his plans. He didn't mean to be cruel, but that's just human nature, don't you think?"

I wrote the story, adding a few lugubrious details for good measure. I drew a picture of Winkelburg lying on his back, staring at the ceiling and thinking of the busy city whose noises floated in through his window. The next day brought a flood of letters. Philanthropists offered to care for Winkelburg. The hospital authorities denied the incident described by Winkelburg, but offered to make amends and to give him treatment and a bed.

A week later I received a letter of thanks from him. He was in the hospital. Three weeks later another letter came. He had been given a home by an elderly couple. Luck had turned. He had all he wanted. Two more weeks brought another letter. He was living somewhere else now and he

would like to hear from me. And then he appeared in person. It was the first time I had ever seen him.

He sat down beside my desk and I looked at him. Death stared out of the man. And I noticed at once the curious kindness of him. He talked slowly and told me of his experiences. He was courteously brief, and even better than that, he spoke without emotion.

"There is nobody to blame," he said. "Not even myself. It is just the way things go. And if I can't blame myself, how can I blame the world? The city is like that. I'm no good. I'm done. Worn out, useless. People try to take care of the useless ones. There are institutions. Well, I had two good homes and was in two institutions, thanks to the thing you wrote. But they kicked me out. They said I was a faker. Somehow I don't appeal to charitably inclined people."

Later I understood why. It was because of the man's smile—a feeble tenacious grimace that seemed to be offering a sardonic reproof. It could never have been mistaken for a courageous smile. Philanthropy had taken Winkelburg up and then dropped him. Quickly and definitely. Because of his smile. The secret of its aggravating quality was this: in it Winkelburg accused himself of his uselessness, his feebleness, his poverty. It was as if he were regarding himself continually through the annoyed eyes of others and addressing himself with the words of others—"You, Winkelburg, get out of here. You're a nuisance. You make me uncomfortable, because you're poor and diseased and full of gloom. Get out. I don't want you around. Why the devil don't you die?"

And the aggravating thing was that people looked at Winkelburg's smile as into a mirror. They saw in it a shrewd reflection of their own attitude toward the man. They felt that Winkelburg understood what they thought of him. And they didn't like that. They didn't like to feel that Winkelburg was aware that deep inside their minds they were

always asking, "Why doesn't this Winkelburg die and have it over with?" Because that made them out as cruel, heartless people, not much different in their attitude toward their fellow-man from predatory animals in their attitude toward fellow predatory animals. And somehow, although they really felt that way toward Winkelburg, they preferred not to believe it. At least they disliked accusation where there should have been only gratitude.

Not that Winkelburg was ungrateful. He was thankful, obliging and properly humble. But his smile persisted. And his smile was a mirror that would not let his benefactors escape the truth. And eventually Winkelburg's smile became for them one of those curious mirrors that exaggerate images grotesquely.

Charitably inclined people as well as all other kinds of inclined people prefer their Winkelburgs more egotistic. They prefer that unfortunate ones be engrossed in their misfortunes and not go around wearing sardonic, philosophical smiles.

II

WINKELBURG dragged along for six months. He was past fifty-five. Each time I saw him I was certain I would never see him again. I was certain he would die—drop dead while crawling across his flypaper. But he would appear. I would pretend to be vastly busy. He would sit and wait. His consideration was an affront. It said, "Oh, yes, I know you are a very busy man. You are part of the world. But Winkelburg has nothing to do. Nothing but wait. Wait until he dies. So don't hurry. I have plenty of time."

He would never ask alms. I would have been relieved if he had. Instead he would sit and smile, and his smile would say:

"Ah, my friend, you are afraid I am going to ask you for money. Don't worry, please. I would rather die of hunger than ask you. Because it would interfere with our friendship. And I value your friendship more than

a bite of food. I won't ask you for money. I won't bother you at all. Yes, yes, I agree with you. I ought to be dead. It would be better for everybody."

We would talk little. He would throw out a hint now and then that perhaps I could use some of his misfortunes for material. For instance, the time his two children had been burned to death. Or the time he had fallen off a street car while in a sick daze and injured his spine for life, and how he had settled with the street-car company for \$500, and how he had been robbed on the way to the bank with the money a month later.

I refused consistently and somewhat curtly his offer of material. This offended Winkelburg. He would pick up the day's paper and sit reading my story through with a show of critical deliberation. Then he would put it down and look at me as if to say:

"This thing you've written about is all right in its way. But it must be obvious to you that, from a purely literary point of view, the material I have to offer is vastly superior."

I saw that his vanity was piqued. I would not have minded this. In fact it was a bit droll. But there was his smile. Winkelburg's smile rose above his vanity. When I had returned to the typewriter, feigning industry in the hope that the man would pick himself up and crawl away, I would catch a glimpse of the inevitable wan grimace that came to his lips and the smile would say:

"Yes, yes, I understand. You refuse my material because you don't want to get involved with me. Because you don't want me to have any more claims on you that I have. Not that you're afraid I'll ask you for money. But if I gave you something you're afraid that it would establish a closer relationship between us. I'm sorry, but you shouldn't feel that way."

Toward the end Winkelburg's visits grew more frequent. I gave instructions that he shouldn't be admitted, and that whenever he called, "I was out."

Futile. There were three things that the rich man couldn't keep out with his high fence, says the poet—rain, death and tomorrow. And Winkelburg was gifted with an almost similar aloof tenacity. He crawled past barriers. He melted through walls. And regardless of subterfuges and instructions, I would hear his dragging step in the corridor leading to my desk.

He wished to discuss things. He had become suddenly garrulous. He wished to talk about the city. About its institutions. About politics. About people. About art. This phase of Winkelburg was the most unbearable. He was willing to admit himself an outcast, a thing on a scrap heap. He was reconciled to the fact that he would starve to death, and that everybody who had ever seen him would feel it was a good thing he had finally died.

But he made one plea. He wanted nothing except to talk and to hear words in order to relieve the loneliness of his day. He would like abstract discussions that had nothing to do with Winkelburg and the Winkelburg misfortunes. His smile now said, "I am useless. Worn out and better off dead. But never mind me. Never mind Winkelburg and his troubles. My mind is still alive. It still thinks and works. I wish that it didn't. I wish it was crippled like Winkelburg is, and that it crawled around like my body. But it doesn't. So talk to me as if it were a mind belonging to somebody else, as if it were an impersonal machine able to pronounce ideas and to argue and to appreciate what you say. Talk to me as if I weren't this insufferable Winkelburg, but somebody of whom you had never heard."

I grew suspicious finally. I began to think there was something vitally spurious about this whole Winkelburg business. And I said to myself, "The man's a downright fake. If anybody were as pathetic and impossible and useless as this Winkelburg is he would shoot himself. Winkelburg doesn't shoot himself. So he becomes illogical . . . unreal."

III

A WOMAN I know belongs to the type that becomes charitable around Christmas time. She makes a glowing pretense of aiding the poor. As a matter of fact she probably does aid them, what with the baskets of food, clothing and necessities she showers upon their hovels. But the point is that she regards the poor as a sort of social and spiritual asset. They afford her the opportunity of appearing in the eyes of her neighbors as a magnanimous soul, of doing something which reflects great credit upon her character. It is certain that she would be unhappy if there were no poor, that Christmas wouldn't be Christmas without the glow of spiritual righteousness and the lift of economic superiority the giving of gifts to deserving inferiors inspires in her. But anyway she "does good," and if she panders to her own egoism as much as she improves the physical comfort of her charges—that is a complication it will hurt nobody to ignore.

I told this woman about Winkelburg. I became poignant and moving on the subject of Winkelburg's misfortunes, his trials, sufferings, and, above all, his Spartan stoicism. It pleased me to do this. I felt that I was making amends and that the thing reflected great credit upon my character—in her eyes.

So she went to the room on the South Side where Winkelburg lived. And they told her there that Winkelburg was dead. He had died a week ago. She was upset when she came back and told me about it. She had come too late. She might have saved him. She accused herself sorrowfully and I listened with politeness. Her accusation was a charmingly involved boast. Her sorrow over the matter was merely her way of telling me all the wonderful things she would have done for Winkelburg. Her regret that he was dead was obviously enough the disappointment she felt at not being able to pander to her egoism

by showering poor Winkelburg with largesse.

It was a curious thing—but when she told me that Winkelburg was dead I felt combatively that it was untrue. And now since I know certainly that Winkelburg is dead and buried, I have developed a curious state of mind. I look up from my desk every once in a while expecting to see him. In the streets I sometimes find myself actually thinking:

"I'll bump into him when I turn this corner."

I have managed to discover the secret of this feeling. It is Winkelburg's smile. Winkelburg's smile was the interpretation of the world's attitude toward him, including my own, I tell myself. And thus whenever his

name comes to my mind or a thought of him occupies me his smile appears as if it were the thought in my head. I have only to think, "He is better off dead," and at once the image of Winkelburg comes into my eye, repeating the words to me. This may sound involved, but it is really very simple. Instead of thinking of Winkelburg I find that I take the easier way of remembering Winkelburg's smile, and his smile somehow says for me everything I would have thought.

And this, in a way, is Winkelburg's revenge, that I am unable to forget him and that I am unable to say "poor Winkelburg" without Winkelburg smiling back at me and saying with a taunting, irritating calm, "Yes, yes, he is better off dead."



What Can I Say of Beauty?

By Vivian Yeiser Laramore

WHAT can I say of beauty,
Who have not touched the rim?
Better a silent homage
Than windy words of whim;
Better the quiet gesture
Of leaves against the sky
Than much distorted phrases
That come from such as I.

What can I say of beauty
That has not twice been told,
I who have slept with dawn light
And trodden on marigold,
I who have hung my heart out
That your heart might be fed—
What can I say of beauty
That has been left unsaid?



A Panorama of Servants

By Charles G. Shaw

SERVANTS who watch with the eye of a hawk every mouthful of food I swallow; servants who insist upon brushing imaginary dust off my coat; servants who breathe on the back of my neck; servants who are continually whispering among themselves; servants who guzzle all of my pre-war liquor; servants who are always discussing their days off; servants who give me the wrong hat; servants who are forever bowing, saluting and salaaming; servants who talk about the weather; servants who are superior; servants who assist me in getting into my overcoat by forcing my arm into one of the inside pockets; servants who call me "captain" or "chief"; female servants who ogle; servants who mutter under their breath when presented with what is a far too generous tip; servants who wear rubber heels and sneak about the house; servants who discover me admiring myself in the mirror; servants who, when asked on the telephone if their employer is at home, inquire who wishes to speak to him, and then say he is out; servants who

awaken me from exquisite dreams; servants who draw me a bath of boiling hot water; servants whose former employer was the "finest gentleman that ever breathed"; servants who pack my bag after a week-end in the country; servants who put non-alcoholic vermouth in my cocktails; servants who, when they announce me, mispronounce my name; servants who are in a perpetual state of surprise and who, when ordered to bring some cigarettes, ejaculate—open mouthed and staring eyed—"Cigarettes!"; servants who repeat the final phrase of everything you say; servants who select their employer's neckwear; servants who wear their employer's neckwear and anything else of his that fits them; servants who announce at quarter past seven that they are leaving immediately when nine people are coming to dinner at eight o'clock; servants who look like the Duke of Wellington; servants who look like Gyp the Blood; servants who maudlinly sob "And sure it's nivver agin we'll see the poor master" . . .



IT is the lot of many a man merely to catch up with a woman some other fellow has out-distanced.



Birthday

By Thyra Samter Winslow

I

IT was the old lady's birthday. She was eighty-two years old and well preserved. To be sure, she was a trifle deaf, but not so deaf as she usually made out. She could hear conversations not intended for her, though she had an annoying way of saying "heh?" when she didn't want to hear a thing. Then, after it had been repeated two or three times she would pass it off as of no consequence, and few things warrant triple repetition.

The old lady was proud of her age. After all, the fact that she had lived so many years was the most remarkable thing about her, as it usually is the remarkable thing about people who live long. She had outlived her friends, her generation, her welcome.

She was still useful and quite paid her way. She lived with her son, Herman Potter, a thin man of over fifty, who had leather skin and a bald head, and his wife, Minnie, a too-fat woman of the same age, given to useless talk, exclamations and mild hysteria.

There were four children in the family of Herman Potter and one grandchild. They all lived at home except Roger, who was married and in business in Harrington. Fred, the oldest, nearly thirty, had been married but his wife had run away two years before with a soap drummer. Lucius and Phillip, the other sons, had never married. Fanny, the one daughter, had had marital misfortunes, also. She had married, at

twenty-four, and a couple of years later her husband had "gone out West to try his luck," and she had never heard from him again. Now she had a divorce, granted on grounds of desertion, and was ogling every unattached man in Graniteville. She had one child, a peevish, pale little boy of four, named Elbert.

The old lady had had three children. The older son, Morris, lived in Kansas City, but Morris' wife absolutely refused to consider her husband's mother as a part of her household. In fact, Morris' wife felt that she had married beneath herself by accepting Morris at all, and held herself aloof from Morris' family. The old lady's only daughter, Martha, was dead. Martha had been her favorite child. Martha's husband had married again. Her only child, Helen, was married and lived in Chicago.

The old lady's life was uneventful enough and not unhappy. She was the first one up in the morning because she "didn't need much sleep." She would dress quietly, so as not to wake anyone. If, occasionally, she stumbled against a chair, someone would be sure to say, at breakfast, "Didje hear Gramma? She woke me up, knocking around before daylight." The old lady was not very steady and had to hold on to things sometimes when she walked.

There were always unwashed dishes from the night before. The old lady would wash these and then put on the oatmeal for breakfast. There was always oatmeal because it was cheap and filling, and the old lady was there to attend to it. She

herself didn't like oatmeal, though she listened each morning to Herman and Minnie who would say, "Gramma, you ought to eat some of this. Fine. Nourishing. Make you grow young."

The old lady would purse her thin lips and then answer, politely enough, "Thank you, but I'm not one that's much for oatmeal."

For breakfast the old lady would drink a cup of coffee without sugar, but with milk in it. She preferred cream but didn't dare say so for the cream pitcher was small and the men helped themselves to it first. After breakfast, if there was any coffee left in the coffee-pot, the old lady would drink another cup, standing up in the kitchen, trying to force a few drops out of the cream pitcher to put into it. If there was fruit for breakfast, the old lady was given the worst piece. She contented herself with one piece of toast, sparsely buttered, for she always felt Minnie's eyes on her when she helped herself to butter. The old lady didn't have a very large appetite.

After breakfast she would help her daughter-in-law with the dishes. Fanny affected delicacy. She was lazy and housework annoyed her. She spent the mornings in her own room reading magazines or running blue ribbons through her lingerie or making rather effeminate little suits for her son.

The old lady was always afraid of her daughter-in-law. Minnie was fat and slow-minded. She was constantly telling the old lady how glad she ought to be because they were all so "well fixed." She liked to spend a long time discussing trifles, how Mrs. Fink's dress hung and didn't Gramma think it was her last year's dress made over—she had a blue dress last year, remember?—and did Gramma think the butcher gave good weight—they had just one meal from that potroast, and here there was hardly enough of it left to slice cold.

The Potters lived in a large, square

house. Herman had bought it at a forced sale when the children were small. It was painted brown and there were big trees around it. It looked gloomy. It had been on one of Graniteville's best streets but the business district had been creeping close until now a garage stood just across the street and a store selling cigars and notions just two doors away. There were numerous small rooms in the house and this meant housework. Herman always smiled patronizingly when "the women folks" spoke of the difficulty of keeping the house in order. He was well-to-do in a moderate Graniteville way and was considering changing the Ford for a larger car but he didn't see why three women couldn't keep a house clean without outside help. They gave out the washing, didn't they?

Herman didn't consider that Fanny did none of the housework and that the old lady really was old, that it was almost a task to walk, sometimes, and that on damp days when her shoulders ached it was rather difficult to try to dust, even.

In the afternoon when the house was in order, the old lady would embroider. She did things for all of the family and for the friends of Fanny and Minnie and for church bazaars. She did guest towels, making them even more annoying by the addition of bright blue "blue-birds for happiness" or impossible butterflies; shoe bags with outlines of distorted footwear to explain their use; dresser scarfs with scalloped outlines which didn't launder well.

The old lady did the best she could. She made things people liked and asked for. The only times she ever received praise were when she gave away her finished works of art. She never complained about her eyes, though they did hurt after she bent over her sewing for two or three hours at a time. She preferred to read, though the family took only the cheapest magazines full of sensational stories or articles about motion pic-

ture actresses. Sometimes the old lady would go to the Carnegie Library and bring home novels, favorites of thirty years ago, but the family laughed at her when she did that.

In the evening the members of the family would go their various ways without bothering much about her. Fanny would persuade one of the boys to take her to the movies or she would go with a girl friend, loitering on the way home in hopes of being overtaken by masculine admirers. The boys would go to the movies or to a vaudeville show or to play pool. They belonged to a couple of lodges, the kind of lodges that are supposed to have international significance—you can give the distress sign to the ticket-seller and get a ticket to Europe in a hurry, though none of the Potters would probably ever want to go to Europe. They liked the idea. A boast of one of the lodges was that none of its members had ever been electrocuted and, though none of the boys looked forward to a life of crime, they accepted the fact eagerly and repeated it as something pretty big for the lodge. The lodge rooms were pleasant places to waste evenings. Minnie and Herman patronized the motion picture theatres, too, but they cared more for cards than for the drama, even in its silent form. Nearly every evening they went to one of the neighbor's for a game of bridge or poker or had a few guests in. At ten-thirty there were refreshments of rye bread and cheese and sardines, known as "a little Dutch lunch," and appreciated each night as if it were a novelty.

The old lady didn't go out much evenings. She walked slowly and stumbled a great deal, so no one liked to bother with her. At the movies she couldn't read the captions easily and that meant someone had to read them aloud to her, and the family didn't consider that refined. She could not quite master the intricacies of bridge even enough to fill in when

another player was needed, though she tried pitifully hard and her hand shook if she held the cards. The old lady would sew or read. There were socks and stockings to be darned and clothes to be mended, besides the embroidering, so she had enough to do.

About nine she would nod over her sewing, pull herself together, ashamed, and look around to see if anyone had observed her, when there was anyone at home to observe, which was seldom enough. She would start sewing again, drop off into a doze, start up, finally take her sewing and retire to her bedroom.

The old lady had a fine room. Any of the family would have told you that. It was above the kitchen and got the winter winds rather badly, so that the old lady frequently had sniffy colds, but it was a fine room, nevertheless, with two windows in it. The one bathroom was quite at the other end of the hall, but, after all, one can't have everything.

Two of the boys roomed in the attic, so the old lady could feel that she was having quite the cream of things to be on the second floor. Fannie and her little boy had the front room because Fanny often brought home one of "the girls" to spend the night or her women friends would run up to her room to take their hats off. Her room was done in bird's-eye maple with pink china silk draperies. Herman and Minnie had the next room. They used the furniture they had bought when they first went to housekeeping, a high maple bed and an old-fashioned dresser to match it. On the walls were enlarged crayon portraits of the old lady and of Grandpa Potter, who had died fifteen years before. Didn't having these pictures show what the family thought of the old lady? The pictures had hung in the living-room until Art descended on the household, a few years before, when they had been removed in favor of two Christy heads, a "Reading from Homer,"

"The Frieze of the Prophets" and "Two's Company."

The old lady didn't have a hard life. She knew that. She was quite grateful for everything that was done for her. She liked housework, even. Of course, Minnie had rather an annoying way of taking all of the pleasure out of it. Minnie did all of the ordering, all of the planning of meals, the preparing of the salad, when there was a salad, all of the interesting, exciting things connected with the kitchen. But, after all, wasn't it Minnie's house? Hadn't she a right? Grandma knew she had liked doing things in her own home. She didn't blame Minnie but it made things a bit monotonous. Not that things weren't nice, though, a room all to herself, even if the furniture was rather haphazard, lots of time to herself, things to embroider. If Grandpa Potter had lived—but, of course, he wasn't alive, any more than any of the other relatives and friends of those other days were alive, the Scotts, the Howards—Martha.

II

Now it was the old lady's birthday. She thought of it the first thing in the morning when she woke up. She dressed a bit hurriedly as if something were going to happen. She put on a clean morning dress of black and white percale, stiffly starched and, over this, a blue and white checked gingham apron.

She went to the kitchen to straighten things up. There were a lot of dishes, for Lu and Phil had brought some boys home after the movies and Fanny had prepared a rarebit for them, using, as is the way of all amateur cooks, quite three times too many dishes.

The old lady had the oatmeal done and the table set, though, when the family came down, one at a time, for breakfast, first Minnie, then her husband, then the boys. Fanny didn't often appear at breakfast.

No one congratulated the old lady

on her birthday, though she made a great point of birthdays and they knew it. However, it is easy enough for a family to forget things like that. So, when they were all at table, making sucking noises over their oatmeal—no one spoke much at meals at the Potters'—Grandma announced, primly,

"Today's my birthday."

"So it is," said Herman, and, with an appearance of great gallantry, put his napkin on the table, arose and went around to the old lady's place. He kissed her with quite a smack.

"Congratulations and good wishes," he said, which the others echoed. Then,

"How old are you, Ma? Over eighty, I know. Quite an age. I'll never live to see eighty."

"I'm eighty-two," said the old lady.

"Don't think for one minute, Ma, that we forgot your birthday," said Minnie. "You know that we ain't. Only this morning, hurrying about breakfast and all, it slipped my mind. I got something for you two weeks ago at the Ladies' Aid Bazaar. You'd rather have it at supper time, wouldn't you?"

The old lady nodded.

"Yes, I would," she said.

It was a custom of the family to have rather a birthday celebration at the evening meal. They were usually together then and gifts were heaped up at the celebrator's plate and there was a cake.

"You're all going to be home to dinner?" asked Minnie. The men nodded.

When the men left the table, Minnie followed them out into the hall and whispered little warnings to them about "not forgetting something for Grandma" and answering whispers of "can't you do it for me, Ma?"

The day passed as the old lady's days generally passed. In the morning she helped Minnie with the birthday cake. It was a chocolate cake of which the old lady was not especially fond, but the boys all liked choco-

late. There was a white icing on it and they stuck marshmallows on that. The old lady hoped not to get a marshmallow—they stick to your teeth when you wear a plate. There were to be ten candles on the cake, for ten happened to be the number of candles left over from Elbert's Christmas tree, and you can't possibly put eighty-two candles on a cake, anyhow. The candles were of several colors.

Minnie commented on the beauty of the cake when it was finished. She let the old lady see how good the family was to her. It isn't every old lady of eighty-two who has a birthday cake.

About ten o'clock, Fanny and Elbert appeared. The old lady brought their breakfast into the dining-room. Fanny and Minnie were going calling and shopping and were going to take Elbert with them. Usually they left him at home with the old lady. He was rather a spoiled child.

Then Fanny and Minnie dressed. The old lady bathed Elbert, who cried because she got soap into his eyes. This annoyed Fanny.

"For Heaven's sake, Gramma, don't get him cross," she scolded. "We're going to meet Mrs. Herron and Grace for lunch, and I want him to act nice. He'll be in an awful temper if he starts crying."

The old lady didn't say anything. She didn't say anything when Elbert pinched her as she was trying to button his suit. She put on his blue reefer and the cap like a sailor's, and buttoned his leggins, though she did wish he'd sit still while she did the buttons.

At half past eleven the others left and the old lady was alone. She peeled the potatoes for supper and put them in water, she straightened up her room, swept the dining-room, dusted a bit, threw away last night's newspapers.

At half past twelve she went into the kitchen for a bite to eat. She could always "feel when lunch-time

came." Minnie usually said, when she went out, "There's always plenty in the ice-box for lunch," and the old lady never contradicted her, though she always felt rather sure that Minnie had made a mistake.

Now, she found a dish of pickles—she did not care for pickles—some eggs and some blackberry jam. She was rather fond of eggs but she was afraid that if she did eat one or two of them, that Minnie might say something about "never seem able to keep an egg in the house." Eggs were high, just now. So the old lady buttered two slices of not especially fresh bread rather sparingly and spread a little jam on them. She made herself a cup of tea and ate her lunch sitting at the oilcloth-covered table.

She brushed the crumbs off the table, washed the few dishes, went up to her room for a nap. She liked to sleep, when she had a chance, afternoons.

She woke up, an hour later. A long afternoon stretched in front of her. Still, all of her afternoons were long—mornings—evenings, too. She had heard, years before, that time would seem to fly by when you get old. It didn't. Still, there couldn't be many more days now—eighty-two.

She put on her best dress of black silk, with cuffs and collar of lace that Helen had sent her years before. Helen—she was someone to think about. Helen—Martha's daughter. Helen was young and lovely and had everything. Twice the old lady had gone to visit Helen. She never felt at home with Helen at any time. Helen's maids were trained automations; Helen's home was full of strange formalities. Helen's days were full of unusual things. Helen herself perfectly groomed, cool, impersonal, looking eighteen, though she'd been married six years, did not seem like a human being at all.

It was nice of Helen having her old grandmother visit her, the old lady knew that. She never talked much

to Helen, never knew what to say, yet she loved her with a strange yearning that she never felt toward anyone else—maybe because the others were so jealous of Helen, of everything she did. The old lady didn't especially like to be at Helen's—she was so afraid of doing the wrong things—yet, though she never figured it out, Helen seemed to belong to her, was more a part of her than any of the others could be. Maybe because she was Martha's child. Martha had always been so much more to her than any of the others.

With fingers that trembled a little, the old lady fastened her dress, the dress that was new the last time she visited Helen. She smoothed her hair with the old brush one of the boys had given her. She looked at the things on her dresser, the cover she had embroidered in violets—they were her favorite flowers—the daguerrotype of her and her husband, taken the year they were married, holding hands unashamed. It was colored, the old lady's cheeks pink and her brooch a shining gold. There was a snapshot of Helen on horseback, a stiffly posed picture of little Elbert, a picture of Phil in sailor uniform—he had gone into the navy just before the draft law was put into effect.

The bell rang. The postman!

With quick little steps the old lady hurried to the door, smiled at the postman as she always did when she took the mail from him and said something about "a cold day," even while she was anxious to close the door so that she could look over the mail. A letter for Herman from an insurance company—a picture postcard—a letter in a lavender envelope from Ganny—a postcard from Roger—a letter from Kansas City—Morris' wife's writing—yes—she trembled a little—a letter from Helen. She recognized the pale gray envelope, the deeper gray seal. The women Minnie and Fanny went with didn't use

great sealing wax with a crest stamped into it nor gray monogrammed paper—they didn't live in Chicago nor wear lovely pale clothes—didn't do anything the right way.

The old lady put the mail, excepting her postcard and two letters, on the hall table, took hers to her room. Morris meant all right—he and his wife—good people in their way—she was glad Morris was doing well—

Helen's letter! She opened it carefully, tearing off the edge in little bits so as not to tear the contents. The old lady got few enough letters. She never knew you could take a letter-opener to them. She took out the letter. There was an enclosure, but the old lady let that lay in her lap while she read Helen's rather smart writing.

She smiled, read it again, put the letter back into the envelope, looked at the bit of paper on her lap—a cheque—twenty-five dollars.

Helen!

III

THE old lady took her work-bag and went down into the living-room. She'd be careful not to get threads around—she knew how Minnie hated that. She was working on a centerpiece, in colors, to be sold at the March sale of the church Circle. The old lady was glad she could do things like that. Her glasses were of silver and quite bent. The lenses had been fitted for her years before and she had to hold the sewing quite close. She embroidered until it was too dark to see. Then she folded her wrinkled hands in her lap. She didn't believe in "wasting electricity" by turning it on too early.

She sat at the window and thought about things—about Minnie and Herman—how mean Minnie was about little things, about Herman's stupidity and blindness about everything excepting himself. Herman—and the boys, too—never read anything or saw anything they didn't apply to

themselves. They were never interested in a single outside thing. All they talked about was what "he said" and how business was going to be. Nothing existed outside of Graniteville. They were so conceited, satisfied. Fanny was just as bad and she whined, too—but she had Elbert. A child is always a little better than nothing. But Helen didn't have any children.

As the old lady grew older the necessity for progeny, so overwhelmingly important in her younger life, had diminished. What difference did it make, anyhow? Elbert, pale and in the sulks, usually—the only one of a fourth generation. Of course the boys might marry and have children. What of it? Of course, if it weren't for Herman, if she hadn't had children, she wouldn't have had a home, might have had to go to the poor-house, maybe. But then, if she hadn't had children, she might have learned a trade and made enough money to get into one of the homes she had read about, where you pay a few thousand dollars and have a nice room and pictures in the evening and company when you like. Still, of course, things couldn't be changed, were all right—there was Helen's letter—

The twilight deepened. The old lady went into the kitchen, turned on a light, put the meat into the oven.

At six Lu came in, then Phil. Then Fanny and Minnie and Elbert. They had gone to call on Mrs. Harden and Elbert had fallen asleep and was cross, now. Fanny was going upstairs to "make herself comfortable." Would Gramma undress Elbert?

Fanny put on a pink cotton kimono and went downstairs. The old lady got Elbert to bed, finally. When she got downstairs she saw that Fanny and her mother were busy in the dining-room. She heard the crackle of paper. Discreetly she stayed in the kitchen. They were preparing her birthday presents.

Dinner was ready. Herman had already come home. Herman liked to eat as soon as he got into the house.

The old lady went into the dining-room. The boys were already seated at the table. Herman sat down. Fanny was putting the potatoes on the table. The old lady found a small pile of bundles at her place, the birthday cake on the table.

"This is very nice," she smiled, "I thank you all even before I look."

She opened the bundles.

There was a bottle of violet toilet water from Fred. She got that every year. It was not her favorite brand—rather a cheaper kind, in fact, but she liked almost any kind of violet. A pale pink satin pincushion came next. A card was stuck on it with pins. On this was written in Fanny's rather stupid, slanting hand:

"To great-grandmother from her little great-grandson, Elbert Arthur Longham, on her 82nd birthday."

The present from Minnie was a hand-made camisole of rather coarse lace—the old lady never wore camisoles, a fact of which Minnie should have been faintly aware. Well, she could make Minnie "take it back" and wear it herself after a month or so. It was Minnie's size, undoubtedly. There was a pound box of chocolates from Lu. Grandma preferred lemon drops or any hard candies that you can suck and make last a long time, but the family liked chocolates. A boudoir cap from Fanny—a present someone had probably given her for Christmas—and a combination drug-store box of soap, dental cream and nail polish from Herman completed the gifts. Phil apologized that he'd been busy every minute and he'd "get something tomorrow."

The old lady put the wrapping paper neatly together and put the things on the sideboard next to the cut-glass punch bowl. She sat down again. Minnie, who served, was filling the plates.

"Thanks, everybody, again," said

the old lady. "Your things are very nice and very welcome."

She looked at the group, the selfish, complacent faces. She smiled.

"I—I got a card from Roger and— and two other presents," she said, and took the card and letters from the front of her waist.

She passed the card around the table and opened a letter.

"It's from Morris and Ruby," she explained. "They sent me five dollars."

"Not much for a rich man to send his mother," Herman commented. "He hasn't any expenses from you and all he ever does is to send you five dollars a month for spending money. I hear he's doing better every month and that's all—"

"Now, Herman," soothed Minnie. She wanted to hear the letter. Ruby never wrote to her.

The old lady read the letter, about Ruby's cold and the snow storm and Morris' business success. She folded it and put it on the table.

"This one is from Helen, from Chicago," she said. She added "from Chicago," purposely. She knew how Fanny longed to live in a big city.

"Dear Gammy," she read, and added, "Helen always uses that nickname just like when she was a baby."

She knew the family hated nicknames. They thought Gramma a proper pronunciation.

"To think that you're eighty-two," she continued to read. "Quite out of the flapper class, it seems. This is to welcome the New Year and to send bushels of love and good wishes from the two of us. I wish you were spending your birthday with us, but I know the family do all they can to make you happy."

The old lady glanced at them all. She was glad to see they looked a little uncomfortable.

"We've been awfully busy as usual," the old lady read on. "Since Jimmy's been made president of the company he's getting so conceited that he insists on going to horrid

business meetings at night, sometimes, so, in self-defense, I have to go to dinners with some of my old beaux."

The old lady looked at Fanny and smiled.

"Helen has a good time," she said, "I like to think of a young girl enjoying herself."

Helen was Fanny's age. Fanny had no "old beaux," nor any other kind to take her to dinner. Fanny was unpopular.

The old lady went on reading:

"But Jim gets an occasional afternoon off and that's compensation. We have heaps of fun driving or just trailing around together. Jim's as devoted as ever—I'll say that for him. I'm afraid we'll never quite settle down, even if we have been married a long time."

"Helen's a great girl," said the old lady. "She and Jim—I never saw a couple like them. She knows how to hold him. I never saw a man so devoted."

The old lady smiled. Fred's wife had eloped with another man. Fanny's husband had "gone out West" and never returned. This would give them something to think about.

"I don't know that I think her husband ought to stand for her going places with other men," said Fanny. "It don't sound right to me. When Helen came down here to visit, when she was seventeen, she was fresh then."

The old lady looked at her.

"Yes. I guess Helen did seem fresh in Graniteville," she agreed. "But Chicago's different. And as most of the folks they go with are millionaires, each owning two or three cars and having boxes at the opera and making a fuss over Helen all the time, I guess her ways are all right up there. I don't blame men wanting to take her to places. She's just sweet to everyone."

She went on with the letter:

"I don't know what to write that

would interest you. We saw Mrs. Blanchard, Mrs. Crowell's mother, at the theatre on Tuesday, and she wanted to be remembered to you. She looked very well. . . . I have a new mink wrap, good-looking. Jim thought it was a Christmas present, but it came the week after so I'm not counting it. It's the only new really splurgy thing I've had all winter."

The old lady didn't have to comment. Fanny was wearing her old coat. She's been begging her brother and her father for a coat all winter, but they complained about "hard times," as they always did, so she had made her old seal, bare in spots, do for another year.

"I went to a charity fête last week," the old lady's quavering voice continued, "and wore green chiffon and was symbolic of something or other, but had a good time anyhow. We made nearly eight thousand dollars for the Children's Home."

The old lady knew the church society entertainments in Graniteville. Fanny and Minnie were never important enough, socially, to take part in them, but had to sell tickets as their share.

"I'm enclosing a birthday remembrance. Buy a warm negligée or something else you want. I didn't know what you needed. Let me know if there is anything I can send you. Jim sends a big kiss and a lot of birthday wishes. With love from Helen."

"How much did she send you?" asked Minnie.

The old lady, who was served last, had been handed her plate of food.

"Twenty-five dollars," she answered.

She took the cheque from Helen and the one from Morris, folded them together, made a last gesture.

"Here, you take these, Fanny," she said, "and buy a dress with them. You'll have to have something to wear if you get a chance to go to the Ladies' Aid Ball. With all the things

I got and my birthday presents and all, I don't need anything. Anyhow, Helen said to let her know if I did."

It was said so simply that, if the family suspected the old lady, they were silent. Fanny gasped, reached out her hand. She did want a new dress.

"Thanks, Gramma," she said.

IV

THE old lady smiled as she ate her dinner. She looked around at the faces. She felt beautifully superior. She knew that, for a moment, their conceit, their satisfaction had been pierced—they had felt something—

The birthday cake was cut and the old lady passed the box of chocolates.

The boys left for a game of pool at the club. Georgina Watson came to get Fanny to go to the movies. Mr. and Mrs. Potter went across the street to play bridge with the Morrises. The old lady promised to go upstairs and look at Elbert who might have caught cold during the afternoon—he had sneezed a couple of times.

The old lady finished the dishes. She read the evening paper. Then she found herself dozing, woke up, dozed again, woke up, put out the living-room light, left one light in the hall, went upstairs. She stopped in Fanny's room to glance at Elbert in his crib. His mouth was slightly open, as always, and he looked pale, but the old lady saw that his condition was not unusual. She went to her room and undressed for bed.

In her high-necked flannel nightgown she stood at her dresser preparatory to putting out the light. She looked at her birthday presents, the cheap violet water, the unwearable camisole and cap, the thoughtless gifts of indifferent people. She looked at her pictures—she and Grandpa when they were first married, Elbert — Helen. Helen — she knew how to write a letter. Why,

she couldn't have written a better one if the old lady had told her what to write. The beaux—the car—the mink coat—the charity fête—the attentive husband—

Her birthday was over. She was eighty-two. Long days ahead—housework — sewing — little — quarrels—

She thought of Helen's letter again and chuckled. For just a moment Fanny, Minnie, all of them had

looked envious, bitter. Nothing she could ever have done or said could have made them as angry as that letter—and none of them dared say what they thought about it. That letter had opened vistas to them that they could never approach. It had lasted only a minute—but even so. . .

"A pretty good birthday," the old lady said to herself as she put out the light, opened the window, and got into bed.



And Does Love Last?

By Louise Treadwell

DEARHEART, you ask me "And does love last?"

The flash of a scarlet wing through green:

A single breath of the unutterable sweetness of distant orchard bloom:

The tremulous morning song of a bird:

So bright,

So elusive,

So sweet.

Ah, dearheart, how could love last?



BREATH—something which used to smell either of Scotch or Kentucky, but which now smells of anything from Eau de Quinine to Valspar.



A MAN remembers the women he said things to. A woman remembers the things.



After the Ball

[A Play in One Act]

By Edgar Saltus

CHARACTERS:

DIANE DES BAISERS
THE MARQUIS DE MONPLAISIR
THE COMPTE DE CARACOLE
THE BARON DE CHOSE
SYLVAIN
SANDOR

PLACE, Paris

TIME: Mardi Gras

SCENE:—A room fitted with plenty of taste, some of it even good. In the centre, a table set with food, wine and flowers. On a side table is a telephone. There are two doors; one upstage which when open shows a vestibule; the other down stage L. Both are closed.

As the curtain rises, SYLVAIN, a servant, is asleep in an armchair. He is fat and bald with black whiskers that are evidently dyed.

The telephone rings. SYLVAIN moves uneasily. It rings again. SYLVAIN starts, rises, goes to side table, takes receiver.

SYLVAIN

(He speaks in a voice soft as mayonnaise. What he says is punctuated with respectful silences. Also with yawns.)

Yes, madame. Pardon, madame, I was in the kitchen. Perfectly, madame. The Bulgarian caviare, the Belgrade duck, the Montenegro potatoes, the cubist salad, the Turkish sweets, everything, all the fashionable dishes are here.

(Bows to telephone.) Yes, madame; perfectly, madame.

(Puts down receiver, raises arms with gesture of infinite disgust and potters about table arranging things already arranged.)

(Off stage, a bell rings.)

(SYLVAIN goes to door, upstage, exits and returns ushering SANDOR—a man, tall, dark, stalwart in evening dress with hat and coat on.)

SANDOR

(Moving R. and surveying stage.) Your mistress asked me to precede her here.

SYLVAIN

Yes, sir. What name, if I may ask?

SANDOR

(Turning and looking at SYLVAIN.) My name is Sandor.

(SYLVAIN starts, half opens mouth and stares as though at a ghost.)

SANDOR

(Grimly.) You have heard it before?

SYLVAIN

(Steadying himself. Then moving down and pointing L. C.) A gentleman of that name died there—just there—not two months, yes, six weeks ago.

(Mimics the business of drawing pistol and shooting oneself.)

SANDOR

(After a moment, during which he grits his teeth.) I am his brother.

(Removing hat and coat.) Here, take these things.

(As SYLVAIN obeys, SANDOR checks him.) Wait!

(Gives him a banknote.) For the present my name will be Cash.

SYLVAIN

(Now entirely relaxed.) Thank you, sir. And a very good name that is.

(Off stage, the bell. SYLVAIN moves up, exits.)

Enter DIANE. This lady is an actress and a beauty.

(She is in ball dress, opera cloak and a half mask.)

(In the vestibule, three men in evening dress are taking off hats and coats.)

DIANE

(Throwing SANDOR a kiss and then from over her shoulder addressing the other men.) A moment, my little dears.

(Exits L.)

(The three men, followed by SYLVAIN, enter. One, an old reprobate, is the MARQUIS DE MONPLAISIR. The second, a middle-aged reprobate, is the COMPTE DE CARACOLE. The third, a young reprobate, is the BARON DE CHOSE. All examine the table. SYLVAIN closes door and stands with his back against it.)

THE MARQUIS DE MONPLAISIR

(Adjusting his monocle and moving down.) Pink caviare, green oysters, red duck, yellow pastry! Tell me, rather rainbow, is it not?

THE BARON DE CHOSE

(With a pleasant air of not caring what he says and also moving down.) What I like is a foam of pheasants and the maxims of Sardanapalus.

THE COMPTE DE CARACOLE

(Following the other two.) My tastes are the simplest. I—

THE MARQUIS DE MONPLAISIR

(Cutting in.) Mine too. I am always satisfied with the best.

THE COMPTE DE CARACOLE

(Indicating SANDOR and speaking so that he cannot hear.) Do you know him?

THE BARON DE CHOSE

(Same business.) Never saw him before—or behind.

THE COMPTE DE CARACOLE

(Indicates entrance L.) She picked him up at the ball.

THE MARQUIS DE MONPLAISIR

Or he picked her up. Suppose we introduce ourselves.

(Moving over and addressing SANDOR.) Sir, my business is pleasure and I am called the Marquis de Monplaisir.

SANDOR

(Smiling but remote.) Inexpressibly charmed.

THE BARON DE CHOSE

(Also moving over.) Sir, my name is de Chose.

(Indicating CARACOLE.) Let me make you acquainted with my friend and brother-in-love-land, the Comte de Caracole.

SANDOR

(As before.) Charmed inexpressibly.

THE COMPTE DE CARACOLE

(With the modesty of the well-bred.) My occupation is dressing and undressing.

THE MARQUIS DE MONPLAISIR

(Cackling.) And digressing. He! he!

SANDOR

I am nobody and—

THE BARON DE CHOSE

But that is an immense advantage. Won't you be seated?

SANDOR

That is to say, I know nobody and—

THE COMPTE DE CARACOLE

But that is even a greater advantage.
Won't you take two seats?

THE BARON DE CHOSE

No, take the table.

THE MARQUIS DE MONPLAISIR

But not the supper. He! he!

SANDOR

And my business is danger.

THE COMPTE DE CARACOLE

Then we are all in the same trade.

THE BARON DE CHOSE

Yes, for woman is danger.

(DIANE, without mask, without cloak,
enters L.)

THE MARQUIS DE MONPLAISIR

(Indicating DIANE.) And here is
danger in its most delectable form.

(Aside, to CARACOLE.) Do you re-
member Sandor?

DIANE

(Smiling and gracious.) My little
dears, to supper.

THE BARON DE CHOSE

(Outlining a step.) The tango first.

THE COMPTE DE CARACOLE

(Attempting another.) A little hug.

THE MARQUIS DE MONPLAISIR

(Open armed.) A big one.

DIANE

(Moving up and indicating table.)
Supper first and afterward—

THE BARON DE CHOSE

(Who has taken from table a bottle
which he raises.) Permit me. During
supper and deluge—

THE MARQUIS DE MONPLAISIR

And afterward the debauch. He! he!

(All move to table and sit. DIANE
at the head. SANDOR at the foot.
CARACOLE is at the right of DIANE.
MONPLAISIR is at SANDOR's left.
CHOSE is between CARACOLE and
MONPLAISIR.)

(SYLVAIN serves.)

THE MARQUIS DE MONPLAISIR

(To SANDOR.) I think I have seen
you somewhere.

SANDOR

Probably.

(Unfolding napkin.) I go there now
and then.

(MONPLAISIR and SANDOR talk in-
audibly.)

THE COMPTE DE CARACOLE

(Indicating SANDOR and addressing
DIANE.) Who's your friend?

DIANE

A man whom I do not know.

THE COMPTE DE CARACOLE

(Between bites.) Nowadays there
are so many of them.

THE BARON DE CHOSE

(With hand raised to mouth so that
SANDOR won't hear.) He looks, don't
you think, a bit like Sandor.

DIANE

(Innocently.) SANDOR.

THE COMPTE DE CARACOLE

(Between bites.) That Brazilian who
killed himself because of you.

DIANE

(In the most natural way.) I have
forgotten.

THE COMPTE DE CARACOLE

It is only a month or so ago.

DIANE

(Indifferently.) A month or so is a
lifetime.

SANDOR

(Who has been listening.) Or a
deathtime.

DIANE

(As though a pin had pricked her.)
What?

SANDOR

(In an easy, level tone.) It must

be such a luxury to lay one's life at your feet.

(Talks inaudibly with MONPLAISIR and CHOSE.)

DIANE

(To CARACOLE.) For a millionaire he is very gallant.

THE COMTE DE CARACOLE

Is he a millionaire?

DIANE

So I hear.

THE COMPTE DE CARACOLE

(Emptying a glass.) Sandor was also.

DIANE

(Very sharply.) To the devil with you and your Sandor.

THE MARQUIS DE MONPLAISIR

(Half rising and craning.) Beautiful lady, what an odd ornament you have on your little finger!

DIANE

(Removing and exhibiting ring.) My nurse gave it to me.

THE MARQUIS DE MONPLAISIR

Your nurse! A very dry one then. I'll wager it's paste.

THE BARON DE CHOSE

Put it up at auction and your hand with it.

THE MARQUIS DE MONPLAISIR

Which hand?

DIANE

(Entering into the spirit of it.) What am I bid?

THE COMPTE DE CARACOLE

A thousand francs.

THE BARON DE CHOSE

Two thousand.

THE MARQUIS DE MONPLAISIR

Four—and on all fours at that. He! He!

DIANE

(Seductively to SANDOR.) And you?

SANDOR

(Without enthusiasm.) My heart.

DIANE

(Tossing ring to SANDOR.) It's yours.

THE MARQUIS DE MONPLAISIR

(Rising and speaking in mock disgust.) Caracole, and you, de Chose, we are out of it. Let's go to my aunt's.

THE BARON DE CHOSE

(Alarmed.) Why there?

THE MARQUIS DE MONPLAISIR

It will be gayer.

THE COMPTE DE CARACOLE

(Stuffing himself.) And the supper not finished!

THE BARON DE CHOSE

(Rising.) Never finish anything. That is the true philosophy of life—and of love.

THE COMPTE DE CARACOLE

(Rising with evident reluctance.) One might at least be allowed to begin.

THE MARQUIS DE MONPLAISIR

But not to continue.

THE BARON DE CHOSE

Except in our next.

THE MARQUIS DE MONPLAISIR

You mean at my aunt's.

(To DIANE, indicating telephone.)

You permit me—

(Goes to telephone, calls in it.)

2000 Saint-Germain.

(After a moment.)

2000 Saint-Germain? I want the princess. The Marquis de Monplaisir is speaking.

(After another moment.)

Is that you, Aunt Clotilde? How is your dance progressing? Ah, I see! Not enough men. May I come with reinforcements? What?

(Covering telephone, looking up and cackling.)

My aunt wants to know where I am?

(Telephoning again.) I am closeted

with the archbishop. Yes, yes. He sends you his blessing. Very good. In ten minutes—

(*Puts down receiver, gestures at CHOSE and CARACOLE.*)

Let's be off.

(*Approaching DIANE and kissing her hand.*)

Thank you so much. Au revoir.

THE BARON DE CHOSE

Au revoir.

THE COMPTE DE CARACOLE

Au revoir.

(*SYLVAIN opens door upstage. The trio, bowing, exit.*)

DIANE

(*Speaking very rapidly.*) Au revoir! Au revoir! Au revoir! They must be all very rich.

(*Abruptly, to SYLVAIN.*)

Au revoir to you.

SYLVAIN

Madame!

(*Exit.*)

SANDOR

(*Who has risen and who now crosses and seats himself beside DIANE.*) Your friends are a bit old-fashioned, eh?

DIANE

(*Demurely.*) I rather specialize in bric-a-brac.

SANDOR

(*Studying her.*) And am I to be added to a collection which I may assume is somewhat vast?

DIANE

(*Affecting candor.*) Well, what if a woman has been kissed? Her mouth does not lose its freshness for that—or for you.

SANDOR

(*Coldly.*) I am an epicure.

DIANE

(*Affecting perplexity.*) Now just what is an epicure?

S. Set—Mar.—7

SANDOR

(*After a moment's hesitation.*) A man who finds a peculiar charm in postponing the finest pleasures.

(*After another moment.*)

I have one in reserve.

DIANE

(*Savorously.*) My lips?

SANDOR

More than that.

DIANE

(*Tossing her head.*) Ah! Ah! Ah! You mean my heart! But because you have given me yours it does not follow that I shall give you mine.

SANDOR

I may take it.

DIANE

(*Coquettishly.*) I believe you will. Do you know when I saw you first I thought you were—

SANDOR

Somebody else?

DIANE

(*Enthusiastically.*) The handsomest man in the world!

SANDOR

(*Pointedly.*) But not in the grave.

DIANE

(*Staring.*) In the grave! What do you mean?

SANDOR

(*With a wide gesture.*) I have come—from over there—to tell you.

DIANE

(*At her gayest.*) You had heard of me! No, you had seen my picture! My picture, well, sometimes, it is in the papers. Only yesterday—

SANDOR

(*To the ceiling.*) Yesterday has gone, the morrow has not come.

DIANE

(*Appreciatively.*) The present is ours.

SANDOR

(*Looking at her again.*) That plural is singular.

DIANE

(*Snuggling up to him.*) The present is yours then, if—

SANDOR

(*Keeping his distance.*) If what?

DIANE

(*Employing all her arts.*) Tell me. At the ball tonight somebody pointed you out and said:—"There's an American millionaire." Then I smiled and you came up and spoke to me. It's true, isn't it?

SANDOR

Is what true?

DIANE

(*As though she were eating sweetmeats.*) That you are a millionaire.

SANDOR

(*With a shrug.*) I am not a pauper.

DIANE

(*With a contented nod.*) There! When a man says that, he is always rich. When he says he is rich, go take a bath, he's a crook.

SANDOR

Probably.

DIANE

(*Licking her chops.*) Oh, I know. Over there you saw my picture and you came to find the original. Haven't I guessed right?

SANDOR

I certainly came to find you.

DIANE

(*Snuggling up again.*) And now that you have, what are you going to do?

SANDOR

(*Distantly.*) I will tell you later.

DIANE

(*Trying to be funny.*) Always the epicure.

SANDOR

(*Rising.*) And sometimes the executioner.

DIANE

(*Rising also.*) The what?

SANDOR

(*Moving with DIANE down the left.*) A term we use over there. (*Considering her fixedly.*) You may not know about my country. It is a land of passion flowers, of passion loves and passion hates. Yes, and of passion fruits.

DIANE

(*As though dreaming.*) How glorious!

SANDOR

(*Grimly.*) Yes, and when the fruit gets here it is sucked dry, and thrown away.

DIANE

(*Delightedly.*) How I'd like some!

SANDOR

(*More grimly.*) You had one.

DIANE

(*In real surprise.*) I?

SANDOR

Straight from Brazil.

DIANE

(*Starting back.*) From where?

SANDOR

(*Menacingly.*) From Brazil, did you not hear me? I said Brazil.

DIANE

(*Shrinking from him.*) You are not—you are not—

SANDOR

(*With the look of a headsman.*) I am Sandor, Sandor's brother, brother of the man whom you first ruined and then destroyed.

DIANE

(*Terrorized.*) What do you mean?

SANDOR
(Calmly.) To kill you.

DIANE
(In the delirium of panic.) No, no,
no, not that. Listen—I—I—

SANDOR
(Who has already taken her by the
shoulder and is now shoving her to
entrance L.) Go in there.

DIANE
(Struggling and shrieking.) No!
No! Sylvain! Help!

(SANDOR, taking her bodily, drags
her through entrance L. From offstage
comes a sound like that of a strangling

cat. It is followed by another, that of a
fall.)

(At once, SANDOR, patting his tie and
pulling at a cuff, re-enters, coincidentally
—SYLVAIN enters upstage.)

SYLVAIN
(In his mayonnaise voice.) Did you
call, sir?

SANDOR
(Lighting cigarette.) My hat and
coat. Then get me a cab.

SYLVAIN
Yes, sir. (Turns and exits, while
SANDOR, tossing match aside moves up.)
(Curtain.)



The Demon

By M. G. Sabel

I LISTEN attentively to your protestations
Of constancy and unalterable devotion,
But always, when you lower your eyes,
Some evil hobgoblin
Nudges me between the ribs,
And tickles my nose with a feather!



WOMEN are the reverse of men. They achieve marriage instead of love, they
marry money instead of making it, and they achieve notoriety instead of fame.



WHEN it comes to learning things, women are like a flash of lightning. When
it comes to forgetting them, they are like a river of cold molasses.



Train Windows

By Jeannette Marks

IT'S a long way to China!
Men have train windows there and tears,
Friends who love each other,
Parting and eager hope.
But it's a long way to China!

*When dawn was coming in the sky,
Behind him the Hall of Golden Bells
And beyond the cries of mountain apes and twittering
of birds,
Po-Chü-i wrote a letter to Yüan Chen.
It was the ninth century
And men knew nothing of train windows,
But Po-Chü-i and Yüan Chen had been parted.*

It's a long way to China
For any thought to travel,
Yet my heart travels looking for you,
And someday must journey further still
Beyond China, beyond death!

*Po-Chü-i loved Yüan Chen many years after Chen was
dead.
Neither sickness nor old age
Nor the Terrace of Night could frighten away his love
From this friend of all his life.
And when he woke in the morning from dreaming of
Yüan Chen
Po-Chü-i's cheeks were wet*

It's a long way to China,
There are train windows there and tears!



The Artist's Mother

By G. Vere Tyler

I

SHE was not young; she had never possessed that quality of egotism that leads to aspiration—she neither aspired nor expected to cling, and whatever dreams she may have had for herself had long since met the fate of women of her calibre in small towns; they had faded into the dreams of her loved ones.

Her heart long since widowed through the vagaries of an erratic, intemperate husband, all her thoughts, dreams, ambitions and love centered in the sole fruit of that union—her boy, Jimmie. Just how she ever happened to become the mother of Jimmie, just why such a spirit as his should have selected her to initiate him through a new terrestrial journey, is one of those high-wrought mysteries of Infinity.

At the time I shall refer to she was probably not much over fifty years of age. Her hair, while slightly gray, was still, in effect, brown and she did not wear it after the fashion of old ladies. Her small eyes were still innocently sweet and blue as cornflowers. She was probably from twenty to twenty-five pounds overweight. There were people who said she looked like Lillian Russell. In a way, she did, and like Lillian Russell's her figure enlarged but did not change. She wore the same kind of corset she did when a girl, the kind that gives the small waist at the expense of exaggerating the bust and hips. It was a style that suited her. She was not unsymmetrical, but sweet to behold. To depict her correctly, it must be added that there was something fashionable

about her appearance; fashionable, that is, from the standpoint of small towns.

There were many in church who watched for Jimmie's mother to see what she "had on," who discussed her among themselves; for instance, her attempt at appearing young, and her extravagance. People one has to live up to are always called extravagant. But extravagant she was not. She was cautious and, in her way—for all things go by comparison—elegant.

From the time she found Jimmie, on one snowy January morning, in her arms he was the apple of her eye, her one madness. As he grew into a youth the great question of her life was what he was to become, what his career was to be. And it must be said that nothing outside of an artistic career, a profession of the arts, ever occurred to Jimmie's mother. If he chose to be a musician, he could be a great one; if he chose to write, he could become a great writer; if he chose to paint, he would develop into the greatest painter America could boast. A store, a factory, an office! Jimmie's mother turned in horror from any of these things for her boy.

And, after all, there was a certain justification in her attitude. An energetic little fellow, a very little fellow indeed, Jimmie had a subtle, rather sparkling brain, and—there was no question as to this—artistic tendencies. They had been manifested in the very forms of his mud-and-sand creations. A mud Indian, despite its dry, crumpled condition, had been preserved. Jimmie, after much deep thought, decided to become—Jimmie's best friend could never

accuse him of modesty—a sculptor. There was tremendous excitement in the town when at the age of seventeen Jimmie arrived at his decision. A party was given, his father celebrated in his own fashion, and his mother wore gray velvet with diamonds.

A little later Jimmie, fully equipped as a young man of such aspirations should be, left his home town for New York en route to Italy. Jimmie's mother, who knew little of art, her standards being established by the Biblical and pastoral pictures that adorned her own home, had steeled her heart to at least two years' separation from her boy. She was both—never mind her tears and how her heart seemed to turn over in her body—proud and glad to let her boy go forth to struggle to be a great artist, a man to make America proud.

The two years passed and Jimmie did not return, and the village folk began to look askance at his mother, as one does at some guileless person who is being cheated. Jimmie's mother felt this keenly when certain questions would be put to her knowingly; she almost felt—maliciously.

"I suppose Jimmie is making a lot of money out of his art work out there," or "You'll soon be decorating your yard with statues, won't you?" or "I guess Jimmie'll be sending home a bust of his father some day," were some of the things she had had to hear.

Sometimes she flushed; sometimes she turned away to hide her tears; sometimes she flared up and answered back. She told people, with a very slight superior toss of her head, that Jimmie wrote it sometimes took fifty years for a man to become great in art; and other protective expressions would burst forth from suddenly hardened lips. But all such remarks seemed to meet with so little credence, so little sympathetic response, and such queer stares, that a feeling of shame would overcome her and she would write Jimmie that just to be an artist at all was sufficient.

There was no earthly reason, she said, for him to become the rival of

those "old masters" he wrote of. She would be proud enough if he only came back with a little image for the "what-not." She really didn't feel about art as she used to at all; all that *she* wanted was to see *him*. She would add that he must not forget that she was growing old, not that she wanted to shock him, but her hair was almost white—the years were flying. In one letter she said, growing quite eloquent, that to see him would be like seeing—the town had recently yielded to such a thing—heaven lit up with electricity. She told him when she thought of seeing him her whole frame trembled and that when she whispered under her breath, "My boy!" her eyes were nothing but salt water.

She used to wonder after penning the words "my boy" how many times in these nine years the tears had filled her eyes when she spoke to herself the two words. It seemed they were always springing to her lips. When a rose-bush she had helped him to set out came to bloom, when she ran across a broken rake he had used in his little garden, a child's rake; his high chair that he used at table before he was "big," the furniture that was bought when he had a room to himself—all, any of these things, quite apart from his photographs, would bring forth the smothered ejaculation "My boy!"

There are those who live in dreams, dreams born of ambition, worldly successes, dreams that one willingly endures for the sake and hope of results. With a husband become, as it were, an unworthy shadow, this woman lived in dreams of her boy. That he was away to become great, a great artist, made the separation, if painful, a beautiful dream.

There were times when she fancied she could see the marvelous statues he was making, statues that would decorate the parks and art galleries of America—statues of generals and presidents and beautiful women. She never thought of her son having a model for these beautiful statues of women he was making any more than she thought of dead generals and presidents sitting for him.

Everything would come out of his brain, Jimmie's wonderful brain, that had staggered her as early as the age of three, when he gave such bright answers to visitors and those conducting Sunday School. Why, some of Jimmie's sayings when he was a little boy lived today, and just so those statues he was working so hard on would live. The little town treasured his sayings. The whole world would treasure his work!

That women—her little Jimmie—had ever formed a part of his artistic career, that a particular woman had ever been singled out to him to—she could only see it thus—take her place—her place meant adoring and looking after every comfort for her boy—had never once occurred to her. Her Jimmie concerned with a woman! It is not strange, considering the manner in which she held him in both mind and heart, that such a thought could never have occurred to her. It would have been like a cloud darkening the earth, a cloud of iron that could never dissolve, and surely Jimmie's mother could never have had that thought.

During all the nine years of her correspondence she spoke cheerfully of his father, everything was going well, he was lively as ever and never failed to tell her to send his love. But at last, overcome by her longing, with many qualms of conscience, she wrote the truth about his father. Five years before, on account of what he called his sciatica, he had given up going to business entirely, spent most of his time with his old friends lounging about at the hotel; and they were living, they and he, on her income that her own dear father had left her.

It was not long after this that she received a letter from Jimmie saying that he was contemplating a return to America.

II

It was at church, after service, that this news was given out by Jimmie's mother. She was surprised that all the

reception it got was exchanged glances, stares, and the rather cold announcement that everybody had felt something had happened from the way she entered the aisle and stepped out.

Instead of the warm sympathy she expected, her news seemed to produce a kind of chill, a standoffishness that almost, in spite of its joy, froze her heart.

Jimmie's mother was not a student of human nature. She did not know that these people who surrounded her and who had been envious of her small waist and silk gowns, of her keeping at the head of the bazaars and other functions, even of her invariably—for they had to be just—taking the prize for the best cake, had consoled themselves for their own shortcomings, their ill-fitting clothes, their solemnness and soggy cake, by the knowledge that she was a deserted mother with an aching heart. She judged them by her own sympathetic nature, by how sorry she felt when Mrs. Bradley's son was arrested for stealing from a bank; how anguished, as though it were her own sorrow, when Mrs. Adams lost her Nannie, just eighteen, with the flu. And so the pert comment and noticeable chill penetrated and acted upon her strangely. When she got home she seemed not to be herself, just a stranger who had landed there, been, as it were, hurled from somewhere.

She looked over at her husband lying asleep on the couch in the dining-room with a paper over his face, rather staggered by him; he was almost, in her emotional condition, a stranger to her. For some reason as she stood viewing him, tears gushed to her eyes, but before they could overflow she broke into a real laugh.

She supposed what she was feeling was just joy, that was all, joy numbing all her senses. Wasn't her boy coming home!

As a matter of fact, after that Sunday upon which she gave out her news, the news of Jimmie's return, she rose superior to every single thing—even the added inebriety of her husband—except her own joy. And this she, rising to

the occasion, forced, so to express it, down the very throats of people. Her butcher, grocer, baker, all the tradespeople, including those in the drygoods stores where she dealt, were made the recipients of her great joy. Jimmie was, at last—now that it was over she did not shrink from the “at last”—coming home, *home*, she would repeat, right here to the town of his birth!

She would go on so that people stared after her and a few touched their foreheads. Mrs. Bushnell always had been daffy over that boy, and it wouldn't surprise them if the shock of his return after all this time didn't turn her head altogether. What with the old man drunk, and his mother losing her head over him, little Jimmie might have his hands fuller than he expected. But there were momentary ejaculations, and the butcher went on cutting meat for his next customer, the grocer weighed his sugar, and the baker gave out his rolls. Jimmie's mother felt this.

There is an awful pathos in standing joy alone. Humanity is much more apt to join in the sorrows of one, and in spite of Jimmie's mother forcing it on her neighbors, lifelong neighbors, she liked to hopefully call them to herself, she was, she dimly sensed, standing her joy alone. Sometimes it was too much for her. She found herself trembling. One day she broke a cup, one of the set given by her husband's mother when they were married.

“Just think,” she said, holding it in dismay in her hands, “before Jimmie was born.”

Later she broke a glass. She seemed, she said to her husband, to have lost the steadiness of her hands, and he told her as he had been given to telling her since the announcement of Jimmie's return, not to be a fool. He told her this when she bought the silk, gray as usual, for a new dress, and spent so much time at Mrs. Martin's, the dressmaker, and when the new turban came, with a feather, as he said, that looked like a church steeple. He also told her not to be a fool when she had timidly—Mrs. Bushnell always warded off anger—

asked him to sober up and be “right” when Jimmie came, and begged him—there was plenty for it—she said, to go to the tailor's to be fitted for a new brown suit, the kind Jimmie had always liked him in.

To be called a fool over one's rejoicing is a part of standing one's joy alone, and Jimmie's mother came to the point, it occurred after the second breakage, and when she had tripped twice over the rug, of reminding herself she must not be a fool. But in her heart she knew that she did not want to stem the tide of all these pent up emotions, that she wanted to be a fool. It was like feeling all over again, as she did when Jimmie, a little bundle of flannel, smelling of orris, was put in her arms for the first time. It really is, she declared to herself, like Jimmie being born and given to me all over again. And she went to meet the upholsterer who was here to measure for covering the furniture in Jimmie's room, in new cretonne, “artistic” cretonne, with birds and flowers on it.

Jimmie's mother had many thoughts, in the future, when she stood in his room looking at those gay birds and gaudy flowers.

But while there had been many shocks, the shocks of the lack of enthusiasm, critical glances and her husband's attitude of indifference—he surely ought to know how she felt about Jimmie—she remained cheerful.

III

“I'll not do it,” said Jimmie's father, swaying slightly as he talked, “if Jimmie can't come home to see you, I wouldn't go to any New York to see him!”

“But, father,” and Jimmie's mother wrung her hands, “he says there's a reason, an insurmountable reason. We can't question that!”

“I'd question it,” and Mr. Bushnell steadied himself by putting a hand on a chair—“I'd question it,” he repeated, “you can do as you like, I've had my say.”

“Maybe he's afraid to leave his

statues, maybe he's brought them over!" his mother burst forth.

"Maybe he has and maybe he hasn't!" He turned to leave and she sprang forward and caught him by the arm.

"Why, even Mrs. Porter says if a child calls, a mother ought to go!"

"Jimmie's no child, he's pretty near thirty!"

"My Jimmie pretty near thirty!" She looked aghast. "Why, father, I can't believe you!"

"He is though and whether he's brought along his statues or not, he's old enough to come to see his mother that's been supporting him in that Godforsaken land for nigh on to ten years!"

Mrs. Bushnell turned pale.

"Don't you ever throw that up to him, father," she burst forth, flushing suddenly, "if you do I might throw something up to you!"

It was the first approach to a threat that she had ever made in her life and her words, like the reverberation of so many bullets, frightened her, more, they overcame her with shame. Her subconscious had ever felt that it was only right, only Christian to bear, to turn the other cheek, and she had forgotten herself, forgotten who she was, forgotten that in her secret heart she had always thought of herself as a child of God.

It did not take her long to know why she had forgotten herself. The one thing she had always dreaded had come to pass—her Jimmie had been reproached!

This fear had lived with her. It sprang up when she read the thoughts in the eyes of the neighbors, when letters came for an extra allowance, for marble for the great masterpieces he was at work upon, that her husband knew about.

And now it was out, her fear had been voiced. No wonder she forgot herself. She conquered her fear, and stood in a flash as she had long since made up her mind she would stand, at Jimmie's back. This was not altogether easy, and she was disconcerted, for in

her own secret heart, in her own mother's way, she too had questioned the length of time it took Jimmie, questioned it reverentially, to stand on his own feet, a shining mark before the world.

She had questioned it against her will when she saw other boys returning from work evenings or when the parents of Jimmie's friends boasted of what they were doing for them. Always she felt that some day someone would rise up to criticize her boy for continuing to receive those checks that the bank knew about, the postmaster knew about, and that went so regularly month after month, year after year.

It was out now; the first gun had been fired. As her flush receded she took a firm stand, physically at any rate a firm stand; she planted her feet.

"Father," she said, "I'm going and now I'm asking you once more to go with me!"

She was afraid of going to New York alone, more afraid than of taking along a drunken husband. So she waited breathlessly for his reply.

"And I'm telling you—" it came after a pause—"once more, I ain't going to do it! I wouldn't lower myself like that, not even to Jimmie!"

"Jimmie says there's a reason—an insurmountable reason!" she argued stubbornly.

"Go and find out what it is and good luck to you!" he returned and staggered from the room.

Mrs. Bushnell, having watched her husband meander down the narrow path that led to the gate of their modest home, stood quite still, shocked again by the strangeness of things, the kind of strangeness one feels while standing in a field of grain becoming blighted by the various attacks of storms. It was she, far more than her husband, who was feeling keenly the news that Jimmie was not coming, not rushing home. And that insurmountable reason!

Her heart stood quite still and she paled. Was her boy ill and saving her from painful news? Was that why she was to go to him and he not come to

her? Her boy ill and sparing her feelings!

She turned quickly in a kind of fright to get packed at once and on her way. What did she care, and she went so far as to snap her fingers, what people said or even thought!

She paused again as she saw the upholsterer entering with the cretonne covers, cretonne covers with birds and flowers on them. The very thought of them made her sick. She wondered why, and went out to meet the man, himself exuberant over having so quickly finished his task, with a sickly smile.

"I guess these," he said opening his goods with a grand air, "will lay all over anything he's seen over there. *These are American birds and flowers!*"

"I guess they will," said Jimmie's mother, with a nervous laugh.

"Shall I put 'em on for you, Mrs. Bushnell?"

"No," said Jimmie's mother, "you can leave that to *me!*"

"I s'pose you'll be givin' another party soon. I pretty well remember the last one."

"Oh, I suppose so!" said Mrs. Bushnell. "We *must* give a party, you know!" and she looked coy, an affectation that rather staggered her, since she felt she was acting a lie.

"Well," she said to herself with a wan smile as the man with his knock-kneed walk disappeared, "it's all in the name of Jimmie, it's all, whatever I do or say, for my boy, for"—a picture of the little hotel around the corner and her husband entering it came up—"isn't he *all* I've got?"

IV

SHE took it as a good omen that the morning of her departure dawned so beautifully. She was up before daylight and a little later the deep red of the heavens, as though they were on fire, made her almost catch her breath. When the sun appeared, she thought it looked so majestic she did catch her breath.

Stealing a moment, she stood at her

window with clasped hands and ecstatic countenance.

"He's coming up this morning, the morning of the day I'm to see my boy, like a king!" she exclaimed. "It's just," she added playfully, "as though old Sol knew!"

And all day considering the brightness of the day, how beautiful everything was, it was to her that way, just as though old Sol knew.

She was terribly excited as the train sped along. The one other time when she went to New York, the time when Jimmie set sail, she had been tremendously overpowered by the great city, and had reached home with the firm determination of never setting foot there again.

"Well," she said to herself, as they glided swiftly by a clump of cedars, shining as everything was in the sunlight, "we never know!"

She felt, now that everything about her going had been decided, and she was on the train, quite bright and cheerful. There's a wonderful stimulation in a moving train, in leaving behind all the familiar routine daily life, too often daily grind, and she was experiencing that stimulation. She felt important.

"I mustn't let my mind wander," she thought, turning from her observation of a pretty girl who had roses on her hat, "or I'll forget that my boy may be sick, that that's why I'm on this train!"

And she felt a queer sensation about her heart.

But wander her mind would, back this time to the hour of her departure, the station and the expressions on familiar faces standing about. How well she knew all those faces, the memory of them wearied her, she who was leaving them all behind to go to New York and greet her son.

She couldn't forget Mrs. Adams, though, getting up so early to see her off, poor dear Mrs. Adams wearing such deep mourning for Nannie. Mrs. Adams had stood right up close to the car window talking with her until the last moment, and then waving as long as they could see each other. There

was one good woman in the world, thought Mrs. Bushnell. I wonder why God took Nannie from her and left me Jimmie? But she ended this reflection by adding that one must not question God's ways.

All day she had such thoughts, so that as twilight came on, and her heart began to beat at the idea of nearing the end of her journey, she told herself she believed she had gone over the history of every soul she had known, big or little, since she was a girl, even down to all the spells of sickness.

"If only," she thought, "I could get over the scared feeling I have that makes my heart beat so strangely. I wonder what it is? I surely am not afraid of New York!"

But even as she spoke, the great massive city seemed coming forward to fall upon the train. The feeling almost suffocated her.

"I'm downright foolish," she said, "I'm not going to New York—what's New York to me—I'm going to meet my boy!"

She was so afraid of actually shedding tears at this moment, that she turned her back upon everyone and stared hard outside where everything by now was a swirling blackness.

And at last at nine o'clock the train rolled gently into the Pennsylvania station.

V

It was not she who recognized Jimmie; it was he who recognized her.

When the smart-looking little fellow in a yellow topcoat, strange kind of hat and big cane walked up to her and smiled a half-patronizing smile in her face, as she told him afterward, if he hadn't spoken, hadn't said: "Well, Mother," she never would have known him this side of the grave!

"Why, Jimmie!" she exclaimed when the embrace she gave him was over. "I never dreamed you could be so changed and wearing a little mustache! Why, you don't look at all like you used to!" And she stared at him.

"Europe changes a fellow, Mother," Jimmie had answered rather haughtily, she thought, as if disdaining all remembrance of a former self. "I'm not the typical American any more."

"Not a typical American!" his mother had gasped, trudging along by his side, and still carrying her own bag. "Son, what are you then?"

"Oh! a fairly good European, I fancy, Mother. You have some change about you, haven't you? We must take a taxi up to the hotel." Jimmie was conscious of throwing his first card.

"Are you stopping at a hotel, son?" his mother asked.

"Well, rather," answered Jimmie, now taking her bag and helping her into a taxi.

As they moved off she gave one swift glance at the little man in the yellow topcoat, sitting quite erect, cane in front of him, by her side, and again with a contracting throat she felt that the city was rushing forward to fall this time on the taxi.

"It's just a horrible feeling," she thought. "I must get over it." As an aid over this difficulty, she turned to look at her boy. How foolish of her not to have prepared herself for the change of nine years! After all, as she glimpsed his profile, this was her own boy, or rather the man her boy had become. It was all right.

"I'd just like to take you in my arms and squeeze you!" she said impulsively.

"Not in public, Mother," said Jimmie, lifting a finger.

"Anywhere!" she exclaimed explosively, "you're my son, aren't you, you're my Jimmie?"

"Of course!" said Jimmie.

It was his turn to glance at her. "It's good to see you, Mother; you're just as pretty as ever, still got your Lillian Russell look!" Jimmie, a bit ashamed, 'tis true, was conscious of having thrown his second card.

"That's what you always used to say!" she almost laughed. "You haven't forgotten the old days, after all, have you, even if you are a great artist and have lived abroad!"

"Oh! I have a good memory," said Jimmie. "How's Dad?" he asked.

"Just the same."

"That's not saying much," said Jimmie, "is it?"

She was silent as to this. They were being held up by the traffic and she was a bit alarmed.

"Awful crush," said Jimmie.

As they moved on again, she said timidly—she was growing, in spite of herself, quite afraid of the little man so erect by her side—"Why didn't you come straight home, son?"

"That's another story," said Jimmie coldly.

"You can understand," she ventured, "it started a lot of talk."

"Not so much as if I had gone!" and Jimmie laughed an entirely new laugh, low and muffled.

"Why, how is that?" she asked.

"It would have meant disgrace, if you want to know, and everybody in town laughing at you!"

"Disgrace! Everybody in town laughing at me!" Jimmie's mother gasped.

"Just that!" said Jimmie. "You remember," he took up after a pause, "my writing you of an insurmountable reason preventing my going home?"

"Yes! Father and I couldn't fathom it!"

"Well, I'll fathom it for you! I'm not a sculptor. I failed after the first six months, and gave it up."

"Failed!" gasped Jimmie's mother. "Gave it up!"

"Yes, and I'm married to a French girl."

"Married!"

"Yes, to a French girl, a dancer, who can't speak English."

Jimmie's mother sat staring at him, and presently she breathed to herself, "Married!"

"Wake up, Mother! Fellows marry, don't they?"

She didn't answer.

The taxi rolled along. No further word was advanced by Jimmie, and after a few more blocks they drew up at the McAlpin.

"Let me have your purse," said Jimmie as they alighted.

Her hands trembled so, as she fumbled in her bag for it, that she had difficulty in extracting it.

Inside the lobby the lights of the place dazzled her. She walked through the crowd, chin extended like a blind person. The crowd dazed her, her eyes stared vacantly, she had a flash of thought that she was glad there was a boy carrying her bag. She would have dropped it, she felt sure. And Jimmie—she looked at him a bit wildly—why, if she felt he would have to catch her, "Rather jolly hotel, this little place," said Jimmie, handing her into the elevator.

Still bewildered, she entered the cage to be borne upward. Human life seemed to have disappeared; she was in a strange, new world piloted by her son, who had become a strange, new man. A moment later this strange, new man ushered her into a room, a very pretty room, with a pinkish carpet and blue hangings.

A pause, quite an expectant one for each, and Jimmie's mother broke it. "Jimmie, my boy," she said in a trembling voice and opening her arms, "come here and let me hold you close. I almost feel I am dying."

Jimmie laughed. "Oh! That's all right, Mother," he said.

Staggering a moment like an old ship on troubled waters, she finally lurched forward and folded him in her arms. When Jimmie had freed himself, he adjusted his tie with a jerk, his smart little coat with another, and walked briskly over to the 'phone.

"Send up a waiter," he ordered. Turning, he added, "I expect you are hungry after your trip."

She made no reply to this, and until the waiter knocked they stood in silence.

Jimmie ordered modestly sandwiches and a pot of coffee.

"We are not being extravagant," he announced when the door had closed softly on the waiter.

She stared aghast; her heart had almost ceased to beat. She was not

thinking of supper or expenses. Her mind was solely on him, her Jimmie who was to be a great artist, who was to make America proud. She said nothing—there was nothing for her to say, and had there been, her voice had forsaken her. She seemed conscious only of her eyes that she felt for the rest of her life must remain in a fixed stare.

VI

THE supper arrived, and she stared at the enormous napkins and elaborate service for a few sandwiches and a pot of coffee. She stared at Jimmie as he gave the waiter a dollar and at the waiter's superciliousness in acknowledgment. And then Jimmie, with a wholly European bow, led her to the table. She tried to eat and failed.

She was astounded and bewildered. She felt like a persecuted alien. She watched her son demolishing the sandwiches and heard as from a distance his voice urging her to eat. She lifted a sandwich and tried to bite at it, and again failed. She was choking. When the supper was over she saw Jimmie take a cigarette from a silver case. As he lit it her eyes fastened with a kind of grip on his face, while an unaccountable sickening wave of helplessness crept through her. She watched him pour out more coffee and sip the strong black fluid between the puffs of his cigarette and fancied she saw a strange relaxation of his features. She had seen that kind of expression on his father's face. As it deepened she saw the likeness to his father, and in that moment she surrendered her son.

For quite a while they sat in silence. Suddenly Jimmie broke it.

"What we need," he said, turning in a sharp, businesslike way, "is money."

"Money?"

"Yes, you see, Mother, to launch Yvonne; start her out in the right way."

"Start her out? How? Where?"

"Over here as a dancer. I came ahead. She's going to join me."

She looked at Jimmie. Start Yvonne

in the right way as a dancer. Yes, she could see that, but what of him, what was her son going to do? She found her voice to put the question. And he answered quite simply, but with due importance, that he was to be Yvonne's manager.

"And how much will it take?"

"I should say about a thousand. You can raise that much," nervously, "can't you, Mother?"

"Yes."

She found herself slowly rising from her seat. Having gained an upright position, she looked about her, the old sailing vessel calm enough upon placid waters after the storm.

She was still staggered and bewildered, perplexed and sore distressed. She was no more a part of all this she was being called upon to participate in than one standing on a porch witnessing a devastating storm is a part of that storm. She had become attached to the incomprehensible.

Wholly against her will, a dim realization of the insolence of his demand swept through her, a dim realization that she was nothing more than the bank for these two, himself and his wife, to draw upon, these two—one her own son in whom reverence for her, himself, life itself seemed to her to be dead. That she was to support this—for she knew she would support it—that what she had for good or evil, Jimmie would go on having to the end, to the end of *her*, cast her down into the depths of a bottomless abyss.

She stood in this abyss, erect and rigid, asking to see her way. Finally, as the sun shows divinely behind thick clouds, the answer came. The house in which she and Jimmie had been born could be mortgaged.

The thought was a horrible one. Clean, upright in its independence, the blot of shame must be on the old home, her home and the home of her forefathers; humble folk, yet free and independent.

Her heart played her a trick, a lump rose in her throat, and her gentle eyes—eyes still blue as cornflowers—filled

with tears, filled and overflowed. There was no sound, not even the suggestion of a gasp. It was a moment of suffering too deep to be voiced.

And then such a wonderful thing happened!

She did not know Browning's "There are flashes struck from midnights"—she had probably never heard of Browning, but there was a flash struck from her midnight as inexplicable as all the horrors she had witnessed, a flash that illuminated her being as the rising sun had illuminated the heavens.

Half-alarmed, she wondered what it was, this great joy that filled her in the very midst of all her disappointed hopes, all her dreams of her son's greatness turned to ashes! For how could she know, she who had never heard of Browning, that complete sacrifice of self must give birth to the illuminating spark? Overpowered by her new-found joy that left her strangely detached and buoyant, with a dazed glance at her son, she turned slowly, walked over to a window and, parting the heavy draperies, stood looking out.

The sky was lightless, a pale, starless

gray. It was this sad gray, the shade she loved best, had ever, and her eyes became riveted upon it. She was fascinated by this color that had ever been beautiful to her, and was now grateful to it, as to something familiar. She could not take her eyes from this soft gray sky hanging protectingly over the great, to her meaningless, city; and as she gazed, her expression changed, gradually, into a look of surprise that became wonder, for back of her beautiful gray sky she thought she beheld dimly outlined the figure of Christ, her Savior, holding out His hands to her.

Jimmie called to her, and when she turned an exclamation broke from him. He rose slowly to his feet. He was wonderstruck, for there, in front of the window, backed by the blue rep curtains, was his mother changed into an angel.

"My son," said the angel in a low, clear voice, "I must be taking the early train in the morning. Your father'll be needing me, and I must see about that thousand dollars for you and—my daughter."



OLD-FASHIONED girl—one who dances with her feet.



ALL women are sparks, but some men are tin roofs.



A WOMAN'S heart doesn't beat. It syncopates.



The Grand Gesture

By *L. M. Hussey*

I

MRS. WEBER'S store and boarding house was situated on that dirt road skirting the long miles of swamp-land they called "the mingo." We knew it as boys; we used to stop there on our expeditions into the swamps.

For us the mingo was a fascinating territory. There were narrow paths, grown up with brush, winding in labyrinthine ways through the swamp and at certain times of the year you could go down there and pull up calamus root, which was agreeable to chew. There were a number of catalpa trees on the edges of the mingo, and in the fall of the year the long pods became brown, dry and combustible. We used to bite off the ends and smoke them like stogies; that was believed nearer to a real smoke than corn-silk; it was "the thing."

Mrs. Weber's store was situated in a small frame building, long unpainted, and patched, even in those days, with odd lengths of lumber and strips of tar-paper. She carried a small stock of cigars, cigarettes, cheap, colored candies and carbonated drinks. Moreover, arranged on a cord across the window, she displayed a library of what were called "dime novels," although they sold for five cents. You could buy the Nick Carter stories, and we were fond of them, but better we liked the numberless tales about Frank Merriwell, a very heroic boy.

In those days Mrs. Weber was a slovenly yet stern-looking woman,

frowning always, and with very few words on her tongue. Her hair was half black and half gray; we thought her quite old, but she could not have been more than fifty. She always wore black clothes and, it seemed, the same black clothes. At least, if she used more than one dress of this kind, one was indistinguishable from the other: the smudges and shiny spots were equally distributed on each of her habits.

Her stern face was unrelieved by any gentle turn of feature. Her eyes, however, were unexpected. There was life in them, a glow in them; dark eyes, very steady and searching. They gave her an aspect of courage and futile determination. Later, as I grew older, it was her eyes that used to set me thinking about her.

I used to see her occasionally, after I was no longer a boy, and the raids into the mingo were bequeathed to the delight of a new generation. Beyond the mingo were the shipyards, and now and then my business took me there, along the dirt road, past her store and boarding house. I would go in and buy one of her stale cigars for the sake of seeing her again.

Her hair had grown entirely gray; her store was less orderly and so was she, and she moved about with some pain and difficulty; the swamp air was in her joints; they were swollen and deformed.

But her determined eyes were scarcely altered. She met your look with a straight stare; she seemed almost to command you. It was as if she were summoning into her eyes an eternal resolution, renewed from

day to day, like a vow. Knowing more of her now, I would not say that she was determined on any especial thing; the look in her eyes was only an echo, the reminiscence of the earlier woman.

She died suddenly one day, a very old woman, up until that time still keeping her cent shop and her cheap boarding house for ship-workers. No one claimed her. No person intimately concerned with her past took note of her death. However, she was buried decently.

A search of the room she occupied yielded a small sum of money and several surprising diaries, the last entries dated more than thirty years before her death. I have read those autobiographical notes and from them it is not difficult to reconstruct her history. I had not guessed it prior to reading her own word.

II

AN old tintype, found in her room, shows "Mrs. Weber" as a girl of eighteen. The mouth was pleasantly pouted then and the face was rounded. But the eyes are masters of her face.

There was a lustrous expectation in them and an obvious courage. They were young, because of their life, and still they were old for the young face.

She wears, in that old picture, a dress with a wide lace ruffle circling the shoulders like a small cape. Her hair, in pompadour, is surmounted by a little flat hat trimmed with a wreath of flowers, doubtless a fashion of the time; a sort of extraneous hat perched up on top of her pompadoured hair as if by an afterthought.

You might imagine this young girl participating, at the moment, in a small-town picnic and standing aside, for a second, to have her picture snapped by one of those old-time itinerant photographers. Under the circumstances it was probably difficult for her to keep a serious face; the others were near her, calling out

to her, trying to disconcert her, shrilling little jokes.

Knowing only Mrs. Weber with her stern face and her slovenly ways, it is not easy to vision her clearly in this other flesh and spirit. Time did not change her only; it recreated her, and yet there was, as always, the regular rhythm of events, the logical progress from the girl to the old woman of the mingo.

Her name was Bertha Patton. She was one of a fairly large family. She writes little in her diaries concerning her mother, but her father, a spectacular fellow, is mentioned many times.

He held the pulpit in one of the local churches, and every year he varied the sameness of preaching to a single congregation by an evangelistical tour to summer camp meetings, to old-time revivals. He preached the word of God with current emendations at a time when there was less politico-social doctrine handed down from the pulpit and more theology. Mighty theological arguments raged in those days and were common in popular debate; passionate polemical dicta on the trinity, the sacraments, the damnation of infants, the exact technique of baptism—matters of which we hear little more than a whisper today. In the logic of these matters the Rev. Mr. Patton was apparently an adept.

In his private life he had a sufficiently strong character to be the *seigneur et maître* of his family. Life must be lived by a set of inflexible rules, and those rules he formulated and enforced. He knew what was right. When he spake, he spoke *ex cathedra*; he had a popish infallibility.

Bertha, through necessity, bowed to the repressions of her home, but they were incongruous to her spirit. She rebelled, at first, only in thought. Forbidden the expansion of acts, her imagination expanded. She took to the secret writing down of her reflections.

Except as it serves to illuminate her character, this early confessional

is not especially interesting. Now and then, however, she displays a startling energy of pent emotion. In one place she writes:

"Tonight I feel as if there was not enough air in the room. It is very cold outdoors, but I want to open the window and let the wind blow hard into the room. I would like to be out in the wind, and have to struggle against it, like you do sometimes in the winter, when you walk home at night and the sleet drives into your face and pushes you back. I don't know what is wrong with me. I want to feel something. I think I would be willing to suffer pain."

Reacting to the moral narrowness of her surroundings, her mind, it seems, grew almost unmoral. She judged events not by an ethical code, but emotionally. Nothing interested her unless it moved her. She was full of extravagant pities, vague elations, unrepressed enthusiasms. She wanted the emotional life. In her wanting to feel you could see the adumbration of an inevitable drama.

Had she been born a man, and so afforded wider opportunities, I think she would have been an adventurer, a gentleman of fortune. Any cause would have engaged her, provided it held the incidents to make her feel. Even as a woman she might have engaged in dangerous and romantic enterprises, had these come into her way of life. But her life was circumscribed, like that of a plant rooted to one bit of earth, and for several years all her inner urge to emotion found no expression save a vague, yet vehement, want.

III

WHEN Bertha was nineteen her father's fortunes underwent a material increase. A man named Breckenridge, owning a country estate just outside of town, happened to sit in one of his local revival meetings and suddenly acknowledged a conviction of sin. He was an old man, rheu-

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matic, suffering with a heart lesion, and he doubtless grew convinced that his days were limited. He saw the necessity, according to a popular exhortation, of getting right with God. The Rev. Mr. Patton showed him the way.

Breckenridge was a retired and wealthy manufacturer. His wife was dead but he had a married daughter, living in New York, and a recently married son who, with his wife, lived with the old man at home.

Converted, and anxious to bribe God into mercy as rapidly as possible, old Breckenridge began to give to the church, that is to say, to Patton's church. The erection of a new church building was started, various elaborate charities were organized, and the Rev. Mr. Patton was suddenly the most important pastor of a spiritual flock in town.

These affairs developed a certain social intimacy between the two families, the minister's and the old man's. They dined together from time to time; they came to know each other.

It is impossible to say, in the opportunities offered by the family friendships, when Breckenridge's son, Howard, first noticed the girl Bertha, or when Bertha looked upon him with an interested eye. She was the keener spirit, and perhaps the interest was primary with her. Howard's married life must have interested her. Although recently contracted, it was plainly an unemotional marriage. The young Mrs. Breckenridge was apparently a woman incapable of much passionate feeling. Observing these two, Bertha was astonished. She was astonished that a young man and woman could act so indifferently one to the other.

The record of the first intimate talk between Bertha and the young man is recorded in the early diary. She was walking alone, near the old canal just outside of town, when he met her. They walked along together and began to talk.

The girl was perplexed, and she

was abruptly frank and questioning. She turned to Howard and said:

"Why is it you don't love your wife?"

The question disconcerted him, and without answering it directly, he tried to laugh it away. But Bertha, searching his face with her great eyes, was immensely serious and persistent. She had discovered an absorbing problem in real life, and she wanted to fathom it. She could not understand any intimate contact between two human beings that was not an emotional one; she could have understood love or hate; but not indifference.

Howard told her that you could not always foresee the results of a marriage; you seldom knew a woman very well until after you were really married to her; you could imagine yourself wanting her immeasurably, only to find, in a little while of marriage, that you could not respond to her, nor was she responding.

"In that case," said the girl, "I think I would leave that woman!"

She spoke with so much energy of sincerity and conviction that the young man stared at her with surprise. He searched her face as if to read the enigma of her strange character. He was, no doubt, interested in her at once. He sensed the inner flame of her spirit, and in that he found an allure.

Several times thereafter they met again by accident, and then by appointment. Interested in the man, it is characteristic of Bertha Patton that she never hesitated in her intimacy with him. There were, it seems, for her no moments of doubt, or reflective shrinking. She found herself, for the first time, beginning to live; she discovered herself at last with an object for emotion.

Under the spell of her urgent personality it is impossible that Howard Breckenridge was not sincerely moved to a certain degree. But his feelings were surely much more trivial than those of the girl. He

probably regarded their clandestine meetings as episodic; he did not conceive himself entering upon an important adventure.

The girl, on the other hand, entered into their affair with an ardor unbounded by moral or material cautions. She possessed the abandon of all adventurous natures. She had the capacity of living within the moment, unthoughtful of the hour to follow. She was awakened to a great emotional experience; she lived it fully, sacrificially, like the devotee of some old, barbaric faith.

Although, in her record, she does not speak of it definitely, it must have been Bertha who proposed their flight. She wanted now the enactment of every romantic thing she had read, written in books, of love. She was not content with a little rôle, a little part. Her eyes, hot with the courage of adventure, alive with an abounding life, dominated the young man with command. Probably, afraid of the enterprise proposed, he must have tried a pretext or two, some little scheme or other to escape her, but the ardor of her arms was his master; her will enslaved him.

I find this written in the diary; the ink is faded now; the years have bleached it to a greenish pallor:

"Tomorrow we will leave together. I know it is a great sacrifice; his sacrifice thrills me. It is plain he does not understand me entirely. He thinks I am looking for something beside his love. Last night he told me so carefully that we must expect to be poor for a while. He says his father will not forgive him for this. He says he will have to work for us both.

"I do not care what happens to us, because these little things are not important. We have each other. I will make him love me all his life. . . ."

They fled to the city, lived a week or two in a hotel, and then, through a friend, Howard secured work in the office at the shipyards. They rented a small house near the yards; years

afterward I knew that house as a boy. Into that house came Bertha Patton as a rebellious girl and thereafter it was her home; it was the limited scene of all her life's incidents. She came there with the courage of distant places, and wide fields in her heart, but life limited her; life circumscribed her.

IV

No doubt Howard Breckenridge was quickly regretful of his adventure. He was not, at bottom, an excessively romantic man; he liked not hazards but contentment. He missed his former ease. To work, day by day, through definite hours, irked him enormously. Bertha's arms and the tight pressure of her lips were not long a compensation for his sacrifices.

Nevertheless, he concealed his regrets. Bertha still dominated his will; he feared her. If he thought of abandoning her I think his fears restrained him; I believe, within the limits of his imagination, he pictured her pursuit and a swift, physical revenge.

For some months he had no communications with his father or his wife. Bertha, of course, was divorced entirely from her home. The Rev. Mr. Patton, with a mental gesture of negation, denied her existence. By a process of thinking he removed her from his life. He disinherited, so far as he was able, the smallest memory of her.

Breckenridge, however, was finally able to draw some word from his father. He wrote two or three times, secretly, and received no answers to these letters. But there were in the letters he wrote notes, however vague and concealed by pride, of a genuine contrition. He was sorry for his adventure. A stronger will had compelled him, taken him unaware.

These regretful overtones in his letters finally moved the elder Breckenridge to a curt communication. He sent a letter to Howard at the ship-

yard, only a few words on a single sheet. He was told, simply, to come home.

In reply to this, Howard sent off a long letter arguing his position. Apparently he tried to persuade his father that the problem was less simply resolved. He was not able, he argued, to follow an abrupt resolution and return off-hand. He made it plain now that he wanted his old life again, but did not see the means of regaining it.

Evidently the old man, reading this, laid the matter before Howard's wife. By argument he persuaded her that it was now within her power to end the scandal. She could go down and bring Howard back, as you might bring back a bad boy who has run away from home. We do not know much about this woman, Howard's wife, but we may be sure that in undertaking this expedition she was armed with an exalted sense of moral superiority. She had that curious strength of a man or woman who acts in accord with a fixed idea of rectitude. She left for the city like an evangelist going out to the heathen; the light of victory was already burning, a cold fire, in her eyes.

During all this interval, the period of Howard's doubt, Bertha, according to her own confession, was unaware of his declension from romance. She knew so little of life that her imagination of other psyches was strongly colored by her own. In a measure she conceived others in terms of herself. For her this adventure with Howard was a flaming experience, and above all a tremendous liberation. She was an eagle, unchained at last, free in the winds, the clouds. She assumed for her companion identical moods.

She could not understand that infirmity of emotion which only plays with adventuring, that hesitates, that compromises.

The revelation came with the coming of Howard's wife.

It was late in the afternoon, and

Bertha sat near the front window of the little house looking out over the mingo. She watched the gulls beating their angular wings against the air, swooping in circles down into the marshes. Half the leaves had fallen off the trees, the thick brush of the mingo was drying up with a multi-colored brilliance, flocks of birds in southern progress winged straight down the sky into the horizon; the gulls remained.

A woman came walking along the dirt road and knocked at her door.

She went to the door, mildly surprised, and saw Howard's wife.

They stared at each other for a little while and then Bertha drew back. She was in no way disconcerted, she had no fear of this interview; probably the sight of the other woman stirred her with a kind of pleasure. She was hungry for just these things, these emotional contacts.

Mrs. Breckenridge came in and looked all about her with a fine scorn.

"This is the place you've taken him to!" she exclaimed.

"Tell me," asked Bertha, "what do you want? What have you come here for?"

The wife made some sort of a superior gesture, and said she had come to take her husband. She spoke of him scornfully, she made it plain that she had not come in any mood of supplication; she was there, conscious of right, and ready to use the strength of her consciousness.

Bertha understood nothing of this; she sensed none of the other woman's conviction of strength. She began to laugh a little. As she conceived it, there was about to ensue an engagement of opposed emotions and she felt so confidently the superior flame of her own ardor that she almost pitied the woman who confronted her. Than her own arms no arms could hold Howard with a greater tenderness, a keener passion. No one could claim him; she loved better than any other!

While they stood, the two women,

facing each other, Howard came in by the door and found them there. He was tired, his shoulders drooped with discouragement, the dust of the mingo road covered his shoes. Seeing his wife, he started back with astonishment.

She turned and stared at him. She swept him with a glance that comprehended his condition. He flushed a little; he was ashamed.

Both women began to speak in the same moment, but Bertha, from a sort of superior magnanimity, ceased to speak, allowing her antagonist the primary word.

"It's only because I pity your poor father that I consented to come down here," said Howard's wife. "Certainly you don't deserve anything from me; you don't deserve anything from anybody. I never wanted to see you again, but your poor father pleaded with me, and I suppose I'm doing what it's my duty to do. How long will it take you to be ready? I feel a kind of contamination in this place. I want to leave here at once."

Bertha, standing near the window, stood listening. Her face, at first, was cast down, and she was smiling. She wanted the other woman to say everything, use all persuasions. And then, these futile words concluded, she would raise her face, hold out her arms, and hold Howard within them, her own!

She lifted her eyes and looked at the man. She opened her eyes wide, inviting him with the glow of her ardor. She met his own eyes.

His mouth was partly opened and twisted in a kind of distress. Troubled lines cut irregularly across his forehead. He understood the invitation in Bertha's gaze, he took a step toward her—then stopped. His face dropped, his hands dropped at his sides, he stared down at the floor.

For a moment Bertha did not understand. She still smiled for a moment, she still raised her hands in an involuntary gesture of welcome. Then an overwhelming comprehension

flooded her like an engulfing wave. Her hands dropped, her great eyes grew round with astonishment. She stared at the vacillating man as at a stranger.

At that moment she realized her defeat. She saw into the folly of her illusion as through a lens of terrible truth. All the great emotions with which she had endowed him, conceiving them his own, were only a reflex of her own emotions, a reflection from herself. He was tired already; he wanted his old dulness and security.

She walked slowly across the room and passed out through the door. She left Howard Breckenridge alone with his wife.

V

BERTHA PATTON wrote this scene into her diary, and after that there are few entries. The disintegration of her spirit is left to surmise. It is a matter for theory, but knowing so much we can rationalize her remaining life with, I believe, a fair approximation of the truth.

No one is indefinitely strong, nor aboundingly determined beyond all limits. Compromises with life are, indeed, a means of conserving what strength of living is given to us. A single defeat may destroy the individual who puts all his or her strength, emotion, desire into a single adventure. Bertha Patton made no compromises. She had no reservations in her mind, no saving cynicisms, no doubts, not a single hesitation. She believed with a marvelous confidence in the eternity of her ardent moment. It departed, and it left her empty.

But I think, too, that material circumstances oppressed her. Abandoned by Howard, she had no one to whom she might turn. There was no saving period in which to recover her illusions. She could not return to her father's home, the seclusion of her former life had made her no friends. She was wholly alone. She was alone

in that small house near the mingo with scarcely any money and no friends.

Whatever her despair, she was strong enough to hold her pride. Across the marshes, beyond the flat paths of the mingo, the river wound down broadly, and emptied into the sea. But I imagine Bertha never contemplated it with a yielding mood, with a despair that seeks a final end; she had not that weakness.

She set herself, instead, to achieve a material conquest. Perhaps I am wrong when I imagine her wholly disillusioned at this time. It may be she conceived herself, in some near future time, regaining the liberty of her former craving. Then, if there is truth in this surmise, the slowness of the struggle defeated her. She was circled about with the great limitation of circumstances; she could not draw out of it.

The boarding house made a drudge of her, the cent shop drugged her spirit. You can see her accepting her condition, at last, as a finality.

As you know, I saw her as a boy, years after Bertha Patton was forgotten and only "Mrs. Weber" remained. I suppose the assumption of that ambiguous, respectable name was one of her very few compromises with convention. I remember her eyes, the hard courage of them, and I am certain that she never knew a moment of repentance in her life. She was curiously inaccessible to that weakness that makes converts, that acknowledges wrong-doing. She lived all her life without any sense of wrong. She was surprisingly pagan in her acceptance of the facts of life. She never tortured them into ethical significances. For instance, there is no evidence that she ever blamed Howard, or felt self-pity in her desertion. As, in the hour of her triumphant strength she did not pity the wife, now she found no pity for herself.

I shall not forget her, the old woman living beside the mysterious

mingo marshes, keeping her cheap boarding house for shipworkers, selling her cheap tobacco in the little store. These small futilities make up the greater part of her memory, but they become almost significant when viewed as the background to her

larger futility, her single grand gesture. She made it, a moment of self-expression, and then life took her for its own purpose and set that hour of flame like a fabulous jewel in the sardonic dulness of her remaining years.



The Promise-Keeper

By Margaret Widdemer

LIFE, that tells you cruel things
And swears them true,
Shall not break the word she gave
Long ago to you ;

Times of April blossoming
When you laugh and know
All the world the fairy-tale
She told you long ago—

Days that hold forgetfulness,
Hours that dream and smile,
And, until your heart is tired,
Love for awhile . . .

Bravery to hear her through
Though she make you weep,
And, when you're more tired than now,
Some day—sleep.



IT starts with the notation AK-LR at the lower left hand corner of a dictated letter and ends with the same notation on a wedding ring.



The Nietzschean Follies

III

Reflections

By Walter E. Sagmaster

I

On Death.—In the finale to Beethoven's Fifth, about three-quarters of the way through, there occurs a passage in the strings, to the accompaniment of a little figure in triplets, for the flute, which is so indicative of "finis"—which has so distinctly an element of finality about it—that even one who is hearing the work for the first time is convinced beyond the shadow of a doubt that the end, though obviously not at hand, cannot be far off. And he is right, for, in one long, grand sweep, with never a retrogression on the way, the movement reaches its culmination, and the rest is silence.

It is of this passage that I am invariably reminded whenever I receive a wedding invitation.

II

On the Devil.—The devil is he who, according to the Methodists, makes life worth living. We have it from the worthy clergy of that august sect that the devil is responsible for Martini cocktails, short skirts, "Tristan and Isolde," the Ziegfeld Follies, Honore de Balzac, art galleries, poker, Georgette crêpe waists, Walt Whitman, cigarettes, and beaded eyelashes. Were it not for the fact that the fellow has his off-days, like the rest of us, our worship of him would be unlimited.

However, it must not be forgotten that, in addition to the good things just mentioned which His Highness has lavished upon us, he has perpetrated several most grievous offenses of late. He has sent us bobbed hair, bedroom farces, "super"-photo-plays, wood alcohol, jazz, and Vincente Blasco Ibañez.

III

On Philosophy.—Philosophy is distasteful to the average man (i. e., to the average man who knows, usually through accident, what the word signifies) not, primarily, in that it places too severe a tax upon his mental capacities, but in that it does not furnish him with a formula and book of rules by which he can definitely pigeon-hole each and every manifestation, phase or incident of life which he encounters.

Sound philosophy is neither final, conclusive nor limited, for life itself is neither final, conclusive nor limited. All that true philosophy can do, at best, is to give us a pair of Opera glasses through which we may more vividly perceive and more completely enjoy the drama which is being performed each year, and each day, and each moment, before our eyes, and possibly to tender us a hint, now and then, as to the authors, business managers, scenic artists and costumers of the production. Unlike the civilized man, however, the aver-

age man has not learned the greatest of lessons: that we descendants of sea-weeds are neither designed nor intended to busy ourselves with the mechanical end of the show, but to observe the finished drama from our chairs in the orchestra, seats in the balcony, or benches in the gallery, as the case may be, and to place upon this drama what interpretation appeals to us as most valid and authentic. And, not having learned this lesson, the average man still entertains fond hopes of going behind the scenes and invading the mysteries of the dressing-rooms—hence, he discards, or, more generally, leaves untouched, philosophy, and contents himself with religion.

IV

L'Homme Qui Rit.—The best criterion of a man is in observing what he laughs at. His beliefs, his mannerisms, his ideals, his mental capacities, and even his deeds may be so disguised as to intrigue the judgment of the most keen, at least for a considerable length of time; but his grins, his snickers, his chuckles, and his guffaws cannot be camouflaged. His sense of humor is a thermometer in which the mercury never runs dry, and upon the indicator of which the figures are ever clear and distinct.

If a man laughs at Bernard Shaw and Mary Baker Eddy, cling to him. If he laughs at the "100 Best

Negro Jokes" and Harold Lloyd, ignore him. If he laughs at the "badger game" as elucidated for the 8,000,006-th time in the burlesque palace in Fourteenth Street, and at quips about prohibition, shun him as you would an editorial by Bruce Barton, or a poem by Edgar A. Guest.

V

On God.—God is strictly a neurotic output. Religion was born on the same day as fear. A tadpole has no God because a tadpole is not afraid of anything—not even another tadpole. The more complicated become our nervous diseases, the more complicated become our religions. All fear is pathological; so are all creeds. Where a Chinaman asked a T'sien to protect him from the storm, and a Jew asked a Jehovah to protect him from his enemies, a Christian Scientist asks a Mind to protect him from everything. The principle is identical straight down through all the ages—the only difference is in degree. Obviously, the Christian Scientist's God is the hardest working of the lot. Well, what's progress for, anyway?

And so, the New Thought, Faith-Cure, Spiritualistic, Hip-Bone-of-St. Athanasia twaddle goes on, and shall continue to go on until a kindly neighboring planet shall condescend to give us a bump, and thus, at one stroke, cure all diseases—including religion.



MEN forget, women forgive, and the world remembers.



A Midwinter Night's Dream

By Cuthbert Wright

I

MR. GILES SPENCER, master of the French language at Idlecroft School, sat at the piano improvising in a somewhat abstracted fashion. Outside the windows of the Faculty-room it was, of course, raining. It had rained steadily for ten days except when it snowed. When it neither rained nor snowed, it was abnormally cold, and a thick fog filled the barren fields and curtained off river and hills.

"No, it is not the best of possible terms," said Mr. Spencer, "But it will soon be over now; tomorrow is Ash Wednesday."

He said this over his shoulder to his colleague, Mr. Horace Skittles, the English master, with whom he was on excellent terms. And at the same time he thought: "Were I in France and not at Idlecroft School, Canterbury, Mass., I would not have said 'tomorrow is Ash Wednesday but tonight is Mardi Gras.'"

"The Sorcerer's Apprentice" of Dukas, which he had been playing for the pleasure of Mr. Skittles, was on the rack before him, but he had broken off in the middle of a phrase, and his fingers, following a vague train of ideas had wandered off on a half-remembered tune while his lips half formed the words. How did it go? . . . Oh yes, that was it!

*Malheur a quiconque une fois a goûté
De tes soirs troublantes l'étrange
volupté . . .*

And the refrain:

*Par Toi, Paris
Mon cœur est pris,
A la fois je t'aime,
Et je te mandis,
Paris. . . . !*

"Good heavens, what a terrible tune!" remarked Mr. Skittles, "It makes our ragtime sound like Beethoven."

"Doesn't it?" said Mr. Spencer, turning on the stool, "Ragtime after all is one of the pet entertainments of very rich and very 'nice' people. It is the only music our boys really enjoy when they go to musical comedies in vacation and bring it back to play on the phonograph. But in France poor music is really the property of the poor. I remember the first time I heard the tune that horrified you so. It was at twilight, in a gray, rather sordid little street lined by beetling houses. Three musicians—a singer and two fiddlers—performed it for the benefit of a rapt circle of poor folk from the neighborhood—hotel-waiters in shirt-sleeves, vagabonds, street-waifs, girls of the quarter, etc. . . . It was the hour of the day when bodies are incredibly tired and nerves relax a little. The women put down their bundles, the garçons, sick of carrying slops all day up and down cold stairs, stood about fascinated. Two little girls followed the words religiously from a scrap of paper as if it had been a hymn. Even the *gamins* lost their air of alert viciousness and dreamed, their eyes lost in the haze at the end of the alley. It was all very plaintive and rather sweet. Then two policemen appeared; the musicians broke off with a scrape of their bows,

and the crowd melted like magic. As for me, whenever I hear that cheap, sentimental, rather tough little tune, I am transported, not to any romantic or picturesque landscape, but to a gray, sinister street disappearing in the blue mist of the suburb . . . full of dim corners which to you might seem dangerous but which to me seem refuge and shelter . . . the sort of street I prefer to the most spacious and magnificent boulevard . . . a street in Paris!"

"Well," said Mr. Skittles unconvinced, "I am off to my spacious study to correct themes. Will you be coming up to tea?"

"Very likely, thank you," returned the French master. "If I don't show up, I will have gone for a walk."

II

WHEN he was alone, Mr. Spencer rubbed a pane of glass and looked out. It was four o'clock in the afternoon, and nothing could be distinguished but a wintry murk.

"This can't keep up much longer," he thought. "It will thaw tomorrow."

When the cold wave had first set in he had declared that he would not put his foot out of the house pending a more reasonable temperature. But after a day or two of playing all four acts of *Louise* and of reading Dickens before the fire, life had begun to pall.

"I really must get some exercise," he murmured, and wrapping himself up like Sir Ernest Rutherford, he left the Main Building and plunged into outer darkness. Literally, because there hung over the landscape an impenetrable fog.

After a while the cry of a boy or so and the cheerful sound of choir practice were lost in the white obscurity, and he was alone on the frost-bound road. He crossed the bridge, the stanchions of which were barely visible above the black river, passed the graveyard which was not visible at all, and found himself skirting the first houses of the ancient village of Canterbury.

He was quite happy at Idlecroft

where he had come after five years abroad. He was on the best of terms with the Rector, liked his colleagues, and was as interested in his classes as it is possible to be under a system punctuated daily with the lists of verbs taking the preposition *à*, the verbs taking the preposition *de*, and the verbs taking no preposition at all. The only fly in the ointment was that mysterious five years abroad.

"You can't tell me," remarked Mrs. Pawling, the mother of Percival Pawling, to Mr. Scarsdale, the father of Scarsdale I and II, "that five unexplained years in a place like Paris is a good recommendation for an earnest young French master in one of our Church schools."

However, as he but seldom alluded to this singular and undesirable apprenticeship, it was not often remembered against him.

By this time he had reached the general neighborhood of the railroad station which he recognized by a green and red signal-light and by the snuffle of the late afternoon train for New York which continued its way snorting and, as usual, a half-hour late. Running off to the left was a little street, or rather lane, leading down to the river, and so on back to the school.

He turned in, and began to stumble rather than walk in this direction, for the street was quite dark save for a single lamp that burned with a chill blue flame at the farther end, and strands of thick fog curled in from right and left, hiding the houses. He decided that he would stop in at Mrs. Dusenberry's boarding-house, which was somewhere on the left, and ask for a warm drink.

Due to some odd effect of light or fog the houses seemed higher than usual, more like factories than respectable dwelling places, and . . . there were cobble-stones instead of hard ground under his feet, cobble-stones, glistening, not with the hoar frost of a New England night, but wet with rain. His head was going around; he must be dizzy with the cold. The single

light burned with a sinister intensity at the end of the passage . . . for it was actually a passage, not a country lane, and beyond were dim perspectives, not of woods and fields, but of streets filled with a hard saffron light and a rushing crowd. The tune that had been singing in his head all along gathered into an exultant melody pounded out by an accordion close at hand, and by dancing feet.

He opened a door, and fell rather than walked into Mrs. Dusenberry's kitchen which had all the well-remembered appearance of a Bal Musette, Passage de Lappe, near the Bastille. Save for the masks and colored pompons pertaining to the festival of Mardi Gras, it was all quite as usual. The ample girth and vast bosom of Mamma Boule filled the space behind the counter on which were ranged rows of glittering bottles bearing the friendly names of Vermouth Cinzano, Rum Martinique and Anis Deloso, which grinned at him wickedly with its green smile, to say nothing of the deep ruby reflections of various cordials. In the middle distance stood the fat, familiar form of Papa Boule collecting the counters from a troop of dancers who were returning to their tables in every variety of fantastic and outrageous costumes. At the far end the orchestra, elevated in a miniature balcony like a monkey in its cage, let fall his accordion and sipped contemplatively a coffee cream.

Mr. Spencer sat overwhelmed on his bench and mopped his brow.

He felt quite warm now, and in a minute he ceased to feel overwhelmed. It was all right; he had wanted to be there, wanted it with an intensity that had sometimes alarmed him, and now he had his heart's desire, that was all. Life had been good to him. To think that just around the corner was the "Bastoshe" with its golden figure of Freedom dancing madly overhead, and beyond, the glittering procession of the grand Boulevards wandering on to the Porte Montmartre. He felt that in a moment the door would open and he would re-encounter a whole troop of

old friends—Marcel, Maurice, Madame Marie, little Jean, Raymond the Marine and the young Ninette. He was so content that he could have embraced a policeman, but fortunately his new Garden of Eden possessed no serpent—the policeman was not there.

"Monsieur desires?" demanded the fat landlady, passing laden with glasses.

"A grape juice," said Mr. Spencer hurriedly. "That is—no, I beg pardon—I meant to say some coffee and a rum."

"Will monsieur take a glass with us?" said a new voice behind him coming from a gentleman with the complicated head of a crocodile.

"That will give us pleasure," said a second gentleman who wore with great effect the head of a stork.

"But yes," cooed two little girls, their companions who, fortunately, wore their own heads, aureoled with clouds of hair, their eyes hidden behind little black lace masks.

He accepted and drank his rum and coffee, feeling happier than he had been for a long time.

It had all happened so naturally. No one seemed to be at all surprised at his appearance, or to remark his American overcoat and his "Harvard" hat. But they were always like that, these people; under a rough exterior and the amazing special language they spoke, they were the politest class in their country and the most decent in the world.

He saw everything through a kind of happy mist—the dancers whirling in their masks and crazy costumes, the hard, handsome faces of the lads and the pale, pretty faces of the girls. Two of these especially held his attention—a superb boy in a checked cap and red sash about his middle, and his partner, a girl in a tam o' shanter and striped jersey. He became increasingly conscious of a strange desire to dance with this girl, to stare head to head into her violet eyes, and it was all he could do to prevent himself from speaking to her.

Now the couple were close to him.

"What do you mean by staring like that at Madame?" demanded the boy. "Or will you explain yourself to me outside, *espèce de rasta, espèce de touriste*."

"I am not a tourist!" exclaimed Mr. Spencer indignantly.

"Oh," said the boy in the checked cap. "If you aren't a tourist, what are you doing here in your *chic* clothes? To spy on us, eh, to mock us, to pay our heads? Would I go to your house when you were giving a party and laugh at your guests and stare at your women? No, I am a man, not a 'gentleman.'"

"Yes, yes," rose in a kind of sigh the chorus of little ladies like that of the animals in Alice in Wonderland. "What are you doing here?"

And it was true, he thought, what was he?

He liked the boy in the red sash; he would have wished to be his friend. Perhaps in his place he too might have been jealous that a stranger stare his friend out of countenance; but the girl with the violet eyes in which gleamed little mocking lights seemed to incite him.

Then suddenly the boy hit him. There was a blinding flash and a burst of darkness.

He rose to his feet, feeling an inch taller, and struck back. And though he liked this boy, though he knew that later they would be good friends together, he had never in his life experienced anything so voluptuous as the tingle of his fist against the bare cheek.

The next moment he found himself struggling in the arms of a gigantic policeman who wore instead of his own head that of the Rector of Idlecroft monstrously enlarged.

"Let me go," he cried furiously, feeling madness seizing him. "I won't go back . . . I belong here . . . I am one of them!"

The whole room seemed to rise in denial, and collapsed like a pack of

cards in a million colored lights, and through the glittering ruin of his dream he heard the pounding music of the accordion. . . .

III

"AND do you know," said his best pupil Travers III afterward, "when I picked him up Mr. Spencer was babbling French—*French*—and I looked up the words later and couldn't find one."

"Patois probably," said the second French master, "Mr. Spencer lived five years in a retired part of France. Delightful land!"

The Idlecroft Sentinel had a notice:

Mr. Spencer's classes are suspended while the latter is recovering from an attack of suggestion due to the cold.

The writer had meant to say "congestion," but had miscarried, and it was too late to change.

Two weeks later Mr. Spencer was the guest of honor at one of Mr. Skittles' celebrated high teas. The atmosphere was laden with the grateful aroma of chocolate, burning toast, wood alcohol and infancy. Mr. Spencer, looking rather pale but reasonable as usual, was sitting at the piano. It was glorious weather outside. The river had broken in the sudden thaw; great blocks of ice floated downstream glittering in the yellow sunshine, and the pines and distant peaks were tipped with Spring light.

"There is no school like Idlecroft," murmured Mr. Skittles to his colleague in a burst of enthusiasm.

"None!" agreed Mr. Spencer with conviction.

And it was as if in spite of himself that his fingers, wandering on the keys, produced the poor ghost of an old tune, and he hummed under his breath:

*Malheur a quiconque une fois a goûté
De tes soirs troublantes l'étrange vo-
lupté,
Paris . . . !*

The Minister of Education and Fine Arts

By *W. Adolphe Roberts*

I

THE poet, Muñoz Villegas, congratulated himself that the revolution was over. In the distribution of rewards to deserving patriots, he had been appointed provisional minister of education and fine arts.

Following the *coup d'état*, he had stood on the balcony of the palace beside General Herrera—the latest of the republic's liberators—and had flashed his celebrated smile over the sea of faces that had surged into the plaza in the wake of the victorious army. It had fallen to him to deliver one of the principal orations of the day, and he had not failed to improvise purple phrases to describe his exalted emotions on the field of battle. The euphony and color of his own words had intoxicated him, though merely for the moment. He was not a coward. He had done as well as any of his comrades. But fighting had proved a revelation of ugliness to him, an unæsthetic business.

As the periods flowed from his tongue like blank verse, while the people listened breathlessly, he had remembered the mood of adventure bordering on the desperation of one who joins a forlorn hope, in which he had enlisted in General Herrera's army. He had gloated over the realization that the gamble had turned out amazingly well. At the same time, however, he had shuddered at the memory of days when he had been without baths and perfumes—and the admiration of women.

Eager to return to his world and to learn how it would greet him, he had

been the first member of the provisional cabinet to leave the palace. This had been late in the afternoon. He had summoned a hack and had muffled up his face in his cloak before he entered it, disagreeably conscious that at close range his unshaven cheeks would be repugnant to feminine hero-worshippers.

Now, as he drove toward his lodgings, he rejoiced that hostilities were ended.

Villegas had a room in the apartment of a respectable Spanish family named Bonito. His landlords had disapproved of his morals, besides resenting the irregularity with which he paid the rent; but had been afraid to turn him out, because they were poor and tenants were hard to get. They had closed their eyes to the bizarre girls that followed him upstairs at all hours. Only on one point had they offered resistance, and that had been in regard to the poet's half-hearted attempts to make love to the daughter of the house, Amalia.

He chuckled at the mental picture of Amalia, a timid, sheltered creature, all eyes and fluttering hands, who sometimes opened the door for him and then fled incontinently down the passage. She was too unformed to be beautiful, but her naïveté amused and piqued him. With what fresh nuance of terror would little Amalia receive the new minister of education and fine arts?

At the corner of his block he paid the hack driver and entered a barber shop. The man who shaved him

recognized him as a neighbor, but did not seem to connect him with the revolution. This annoyed Villegas. The next moment he told himself that nothing was to be expected of a barber, who lurked in a dark shop from one day's end to another. He recovered his equanimity and swaggered homeward, his lush countenance beaming and flushed with a glow of health, a legacy of the past two months in the open.

The Bonito family saw him coming and tumbled over themselves to show that they had heard of his rise in the world. The father bowed jerkily three or four times and addressed him by his title. The mother and the two undergrown sons, whom he had regarded as below contempt, interrupted one another with their chattered compliments. Amalia had tears in her great eyes. It was all very gratifying.

Bottles of imported wine—a luxury that the Bonitos allowed themselves only on wedding anniversaries and other great occasions—were set out on the shabby sideboard. The poet accepted the tribute, waving his hands gracefully. His lips were perpetually parted to show his teeth, white, small and regular like those of a stage favorite. In both of his full, olive-tinted cheeks appeared creases that were almost dimples.

After he had drunk, he took the father aside. Shrugging his shoulders in affected distaste at mentioning money, he paid his rent bill from a thick packet of hundred-peseta notes he had obtained from the revolutionary treasurer. Murmurs of admiration followed him to his room.

Villegas did not remain there long. He glanced over the pile of letters that had accumulated and chose half a dozen envelopes addressed in various feminine handwritings and exhaling various scents. These he opened as he walked down the street, stopping under street lamps to read the missives, then thrusting them into his pocket with a satisfied tightening of his lips, or a narrowing of his eyelids in ephemeral doubt.

It was delightful to be a hero, as

well as a poet, he reflected. Military and political glory enhanced one's importance in the eyes of a certain type of difficult woman. And one needed all kinds of women, as one needed variety in music, flowers, wines, perfumes. Decidedly, he had done well to sacrifice his comfort by campaigning with Herrera. . . . An opportunity, in fact, that he had been big enough to grasp . . . a marvelous combination of circumstances, seeing that the cause was one in which he believed—more or less. . . . Liberalism! . . . Hm! . . . A patrician movement would have been more picturesque. . . . But yes, he had always belonged to the Liberal Party, and he remained loyal to the idea.

II

THE tropical night had dropped abruptly, like a cloak, upon the capital. Muñoz Villegas was on his way to the Café de Francia, at the corner of the Rambla and the Calle Rincón, his favorite haunt, a gathering place for journalists and more ambitious literary aspirants, where he had of late years been accepted as an oracle.

Taking a short-cut through some alleys where the balconies of the houses almost met overhead, he was pleased to find that occasionally he was identified as a leader of the winning faction. He saluted amiably whenever this happened, but hurried on until he was near the café. Then he relapsed into a deliberate saunter, loosened his cloak and held his head back. A velour hat shaded his eyes, but light fell upon his shapely neck, his rather effeminate chin and red lips. The passersby were left no excuse for failing to realize that this was the minister of education and fine arts.

At the Café de Francia a dozen men started from their seats at sidewalk tables and surrounded him, all talking at once, gesticulating. Proud of the distinction that had come to them, they guided him indoors and stood by as if their services as a body-guard would be permanently required. The buzz of conversation was transmuted instantly

into a clamor of exuberant welcome. . . .

"Hola, Villegas!"

"Viva, el ministro!"

"Ay, que hombre!"

"Hola, hola!"

. . . Villegas pretended to an embarrassment he was far from feeling. He took off his hat, blinked and smiled, shrugged his shoulders and made odd little deprecatory motions with his hands. When he had been sufficiently applauded he made a speech. It was less flowery than the oration he had delivered in the plaza. He spoke as one among friends, but the thread of subtle arrogance that ran through the words convinced his hearers that here was an indubitable statesman, no less than a poet.

A newspaper writer with a grizzled pompadour and the shaven features of an ignoble monk enticed him over to a table about which admirers were tightly packed.

"What is the program of the new régime?" he asked, in voracious famine for facts for the next morning's editorial.

"I cannot be interviewed," replied Villegas blandly.

"Understood. But among ourselves—old friends, you know—will there be proscriptions, executions and decrees of exile, and all that sort of thing? The former president is a prisoner, I hear. Will he be shot?"

"You will have to put those questions to General Herrera."

The journalist puffed despairfully. "A word about General Herrera, then? What sort of man is he? The public does not know him very well."

"He is the savior of his country, the most unselfish advocate of justice in our history—a true patriot," said Villegas in a bored tone.

"Of course, of course! No one with brains in his head can doubt that." The journalist was faintly alarmed lest he had seemed to belittle the new dictator. He raised his voice in a shout to the headwaiter and ordered champagne to

be served continuously through the evening. But Villegas would drink only one glass with him, before he moved to another table.

The poet was monopolized by a group of younger men eager to fête him, and capriciously he started a harangue on what might be expected of the government.

"We fought to restore liberty to the republic," he declaimed. "We fought to smooth the way of progress. From this day, oppression is abolished. A new epoch, my friends. And what does that signify for us, the artists, the dreamers, who have never hitherto received encouragement? There can be only one answer when you recall that I am minister of education and fine arts. I shall make our capital the Athens of America. The servitors of beauty will be honored and protected by a beneficent State."

Tongues clicked in approval. Eyes brightened. The half-starved intellectuals grievously needed a patron. They became on the spot devoted adherents of the de facto administration and of Muñoz Villegas in particular.

"Will political comment be censored?" cut in a practical youth, whose forte was caricaturing men in office, irrespective of where his own sympathies lay.

"I cannot imagine a censorship under the Liberal Party," answered Villegas, dismissing the heresy with a grand gesture. Secretly, he hoped that Herrera would not give him the lie the next day.

"And in questions of so-called public morals—the bull fight, gambling, nude dancing at the theatre? Eh, Villegas? You reformers aren't planning to make us virtuous on the North American pattern, are you?"

"No censorship of any kind," promised the poet recklessly. "Freedom to amuse oneself is just as important as political freedom."

The pompadoured journalist had edged once more within speaking distance.

"That is good news," he said. "You must know that the city has been run-

ning absolutely wild tonight, fearing that gaiety was soon to be suppressed. The cabarets are putting on sensational acts that even the last administration prohibited. The manager here promises some lively entertainment in a little while. Naturally, the police aren't paying the slightest attention; they don't know whether they are to hold their jobs and are practically off duty."

"*Ay, que rica!*" murmured Villegas, agreeably stimulated.

Now that he had made his entrance, produced his sensation, ennui at the exclusive company of his own sex had begun to overtake him. With the advent of singers and dancers in a lawless mood he could count on an evening of the sort he liked best. His acquaintance in theatrical circles had always been phenomenally wide. He would be sure to meet old loves and, perhaps, win new ones.

The café was provided with alcoves, from between the curtains of which flirtations with the entertainers could be conducted under ideal conditions. Villegas took possession of the best alcove and sat back luxuriously, smoking a cigarette and sipping now and then at a glass of sherry.

The *flamenco* dancers that stormed across the floor as the first attraction were friends of his. He waved to them and the girls threw back amorous glances, biting their lips.

Too bad, he mused, that they had no further novelty to offer him. They were really quite pretty, especially Juanita Marmól, with her pallor of old ivory and such exceedingly black hair. But he had had an affair with Juanita six months before. He did not invite her to the alcove after the act. When she came of her own accord he snubbed her delicately, so that she left frantic with passion, swearing she was his slave he might torture if he chose, but that the blood of the next woman who dared to love him was already on her knife.

Villegas smiled ironically into his cigarette smoke for a few moments after she had gone. A salvo of applause

brought his gaze back to the dancing floor. A slender, quivering creature, a Carmen in golden and flame-colored silk, was poised alone, castanets in either hand. She was staring at him, and as soon as she saw she had gained his attention she cried rather than sang the opening lines of one of his own lyrics, then threw herself into a dance of ferocity and joy. It was Pilar Obando, the star of all stars in the capital, the headliner for the past two years at the Teatro Bolívar. Villegas had tried in vain to win her favor. But that had been before the revolution. Now she was seeking him out.

He leaned forward on his elbow, cupping one plump cheek in his palm. He was pleasantly agitated, but took care to mask his emotion. Pilar had almost finished her dance and had made her second meaningful gesture in his direction before he arose, beat his hands together in soundless applause and indicated, smiling, a vacant chair beside him.

Pilar came to the alcove in her silks and white lace *manto*. She brought with her a breath of perfume, singularly exotic, founded as it was on vanilla, with a suggestion of musk and santal. Her blunt features of an Andalusian beauty had been handed down to her unmodified through generations of native forefathers.

Villegas raised her hand to his red lips. "What a pleasure, what a surprise, to see you at our humble Café de Francia!" he said half mockingly.

"I would not perform for noisy soldiers at the theater tonight. But when I heard that you were here—"

"Pilar Obando danced for me alone! I am too much honored," interrupted the poet. "But perhaps she remembered my homage of days gone by."

She flashed an astute glance at him: "You see whose poem I had by heart to recite just now. Always I have admired your genius."

"No?" murmured Villegas, his vanity touched in its most sensitive spot. Abandoning his pose of a great man receiving tribute, he leaned toward her,

his nostrils palpitating, a flush spreading over his brunet skin.

Pilar, as a matter of fact, was too arrogant to be merely concerned with putting herself right with the new government. She thought well of poets who succeeded in advertising themselves. That a café oracle should have carved his way into the cabinet seemed to her an exploit at the same time practical and romantic. Such a man must always have been talented. It was not difficult for her to persuade herself that she had singled him out from the crowd, had anticipated his triumph. If she had failed to tell him so, those who pursued her with demands upon her time were to blame.

"If there is to be a fête to celebrate the revolution, I shall make a new dance for some beautiful thing you have written," she told him.

"But, naturally, there will be a fête," he guaranteed expansively. "The bureau of fine arts will be in charge of it. And the bureau—that is myself." He struck his chest. "I shall create a rôle of glory for you. You shall be the queen of the dance. The Obando and Villegas! We shall win an ovation together. The capital will be at our feet."

He forgot in his ebullience that, if there was to be a popular hero, the man in the palace, one General Herrera, had first claim to the honor. And Pilar, though shrewd enough to discount the bombastic words, liked him the more because he was not modest. She drew in her breath with a little gasp. Her eyelids with their enormous lashes almost closed under her sullen brows.

"Mother of God, I am sick of dull men!" she cried. "I have been looking for one like you."

Muñoz Villegas possessed a technique which never failed him in circumstances of the kind. He stood up now to draw the curtains of the alcove, but he did not take his eyes from the enamored face of the dancer. His smile was a commingling of sensuous admiration and an insolent celebration of victory. Morbidly intelligent himself, he was

aware that her mind was that of a savage or a child. She knew nothing, really, about his poetry. She had come to him because he was a hero, and the finesse she would appreciate would be that of cruelty and force. He must not let her gain the upper hand.

He moved to her side and maintained the suspense for several minutes, throwing his head back and narrowing his eyes, posturing like a gorgeous cat that will not be hurried. Pilar waited dumbly. He seized her in his arms at last and overwhelmed her with piercing kisses.

Later, they drank champagne together. Pilar would have gone anywhere to please him, done anything that he dictated. But it was his caprice to escort her ceremoniously to the door of her hotel, and to return home on foot in the early hours of the morning.

III

THE streets were deserted now, except for a few blanketed peons and an occasional sentry. The soldiers halted the minister of education and fine arts, but saluted respectfully when he had identified himself. He felt exalted, a person of greater importance than he had been on the field of battle.

His thoughts wandering to General Herrera, he asked himself how the new dictator had spent the night? No doubt, Herrera had been pursued by even more exquisite women than Pilar Obando and Juanita Marmól. The possibility irritated the poet. But, the next instant, he smiled and waved his hand in the night.

"Almost, I do not envy Herrera!" he conceded magnanimously.

At the Bonito apartment, he rang the bell and waited, shivering slightly in the chill air, for some one to admit him. "What a cursed time they take!" he muttered, drawing his cloak more tightly about him. He heard some one fumbling at the bolt and prepared to scowl at the timid old Spaniard or one of the stunted boys. But when the door

was opened, he saw that it was little Amalia who had come down.

She stammered a frightened answer to his greeting and retreated a few steps before him. The candle she carried threw a flickering light on her adolescent face with its great eyes.

"Ay!" he murmured. "You grow more beautiful all the time, *chiquita*."

He spoke the words lightly. They were the small change of gallantry that he habitually scattered among non-descript girls. But Amalia faltered and drew up against the wall of the passageway. Her gaze met his with a degree of steadiness, for the first time.

"Beautiful? Ah, no!" she protested. "You do not find me beautiful."

"Why not? I, also, have eyes in my head."

"But you are a poet—a wonderful master—and a statesman—too great to notice me," she gasped, terrified, but adoring.

Villegas studied her with an interest that was tinged with sardonic amusement. He had forgotten that the night wind was chilly.

"Ay! Even little Amalia!" he muttered.

He advanced upon her from the doorway, enjoying the savor of this easiest of all his conquests. His malice was a form of egotism, rarely encountered except in the lands of the sun.

Amalia struggled in his arms, but hers was a weak fluttering, predestined to defeat. After he had kissed her, he stood back. She leaned against the wall, quivering with emotion, her head raised. The candle had fallen and gone out, but a ray of light from a street lamp struck full upon her.

"I have always hoped you might love me—" began Villegas.

A tangible object, like a night-bird or a bat, whirled past him. Amalia coughed suddenly and started to one side, as if some one had pushed her. An expression of foolish wonder spread over her young face. She twisted her hands about, as if she wished to raise them to her breast and could not, then slipped to the tiled pavement. The bone hilt of a knife detached itself against the somber wrap she wore.

"Blood of God!" cried Villegas, and leaped for the doorway.

Down the middle of the street he could see a woman running. He knew that lithe body well . . . that fleet dancer's pace . . . Juanita Marmól . . . Why, she had meant her threat at the café! . . . But it was useless to try to catch her.

He turned back and dropped onto his knees beside little Amalia. She was dead. A pang of terror and pity shot through Villegas. Tears ran down his cheeks. Then, with extraordinary candor, he told himself that even this death was flattering to him. It was homage paid to a great lover and a great man.

When the Bonito family rushed down a few moments later he was still bending over the pale lips that had received from him their first and last kisses.

"A political enemy tried to assassinate me," he explained tragically, regretful that he could not afford to let the truth be known. "A knife thrown by an enemy of progress and liberty missed me and destroyed this innocent one."



SS. Mch 1922

Peacock Alley

By George Jean Nathan

I

A VAIN fellow myself, and given on occasion to an absurd and pestersome roosterishness, it yet beguiles me as a connoisseur of procacity to meditate from time to time upon the *amour propre* of those gentlemen whose profession, if not accomplishment, is the art of acting. It is a subject that invites. For the actor's vanity is not a simple thing, founded like mine or yours upon an easily—nay, almost a childishly—penetrable donkeyishness, but one as complex and majestic as the maze of Amenemhat III. It is not so much that the actor views himself as a devastatingly pretty one, a holocaust to drive ladies to drink and servant girls to ruin. There is in this occasionally warrant for him; for surely there was not a chambermaid in all of England who would not have elected a *faux pas* with George Alexander to one with Lloyd George or Thomas Hardy. Nor is there perhaps in our own country a lady vice crusader or demimondaine who would not fight more tepidly for her honor against Mr. John Barrymore or Mr. Chauncey Olcott than against Woodrow Wilson, or even Harry Kemp. There is a flavor even to the beauty of Mr. George Bickel, I dare say, that is not lost upon certain fair dilettanti who are stubbornly impervious to the charms of such lesser lights as Henry Seidel Canby, H. L. Mencken, and Colonel Jacob Ruppert. No, the vanity of the actor is not to be challenged on the ground of loveliness, for certainly it would be a brave housewife who

would permit her cook to take the same chances up a dark alley with a stock company magnifico that she would permit her to take with a policeman or, indeed, a choir master.

Yet, for all this measure of justification in the actor's vanity, his chestiness in an ornamental direction takes on at times an expansion that quite exceeds the bounds of credulity. In example, consider the case of Mr. Leo Ditrichstein. As is well known, this Ditrichstein has in the last eight or ten years permitted himself to appear only in such plays as would vouchsafe him the opportunity to show himself as a *distingué* and wistful *roué* who irresistibly seduces all the ladies in the cast save the ingénue, whom he gives over with a magnificently impressive gesture of self-abnegation to the calf-faced juvenile. The Ditrichstein vehicles have come to be so many dramatizations of the Fatty Arbuckle case, somewhat romanticized by the injection of white gloves, an Inverness coat and a top hat, several allusions to Claridge's, the Riviera and Paris under the springtime moon, a few gilt chairs, a reference to Pol Roger 1906, and the philosophy that it is better to be poor and in love than to be rich and president of the Ansbacher Insecticide Company.

This season, however, the M. Ditrichstein announced that he was done with these revelations of himself as the resplendent and invincible Don Juan, and that he would instead appear in a play in which he would portray a fellow excessively homely and unloved. This, his answer to those who had made sport of his egotism.

The play in point was the Italian Sabatino Lopez's "The Ugly Ferrante" and, as one knew from the manuscript, it would treat of the love duel between an inordinately unsightly man on the one side and a remarkably handsome one on the other. And the case against the Ditrichstein vanity seemed to blow up with a loud report. But wait. The opening night. The fiddlers cease. The lights go down. The curtain goes up. And there, upon the stage, sure enough, is our Ditrichstein made up in unornamental red wig and horn spectacles. The jury is about to dismiss the charge. But stop. What is this? The actor who plays the remarkably handsome man comes upon the *bühne*. *Latet anguis in herba. Ab uno disce omnes. Vanitas est vanitas.* Our Ditrichstein has cunningly cast for the role of the remarkably handsome creature an actor with the face of an Hungarian haberdasher!

But if the cream of the actor's self-esteem lies not in the belief in his manly beauty and in its effect upon the ladies, we find it perhaps in his assiduous pretensions to intelligence. This is human enough, and readily understandable. It is nature for the homely, intelligent man to wish to be good-looking, and for the good-looking idiot to wish to be intelligent. Consequently, an actor, like a pretty flapper, takes infinitely greater pride in being told that he is intelligent than in being told that he is handsome. Even the humblest actor in a barnstorming troupe may be seen while traveling in railway coaches elaborately reading some book that does not interest him in the least but to whose content he heroically—and with considerable pseudo-profound conversation—aspires.

Of course, all this effort on the part of the actor is nonsensical. Intelligence, as I have often observed, is no more necessary to an actor than good looks are necessary to a veterinary surgeon. Intelligence is not an asset to the actor, but something of a

handicap, just as it is a handicap to a clergyman, a popular song writer or a trousers presser. Intelligence constipates the emotions, and emotionalism is the actor's *sine qua non*, as it is the *sine qua non* of the evangelist, the composer of popular songs and others whose prosperity lies in the excitation and capitalization of the simple passions and ecstasies. Mr. Walter Hampden is an intelligent man and hence the worst of the more conspicuous Shakespearian actors on our stage. Yet though intelligence and the profession of acting are correctly divorced, the actor strives preposterously to present himself as a profound fellow, even as does the average stockbroker. This striving is often jocosely illustrated in the plays an actor chooses for himself when he sets out on independent production. There is Mr. Norman Trevor, for instance. Having played a dozen roles in the managers' exhibits wherein he was displayed as a Romeo, a Brummell and an Adonis, the customary impatience to bask in the light of erudition seizes this Trevor and, by way of gratifying his whim, he rushes out and squanders his hard-earned wages on Fernald's old piece, "The Married Woman," which has no other virtue than the opportunity it offers the leading actor to be alluded to by all the other characters as a deep thinker and to bedevil these characters, when he is on the stage, with divers magnificent cynicisms.

When the vanity of the actor is not concerned with his beauty or his intellect, one generally finds it directed either toward fashionable favor or managerial achievement. There doubtless never existed an actor who would not rather be invited once to tea in a Fifth Avenue house than ten times to dinner with the President of the United States. I may be doing the estimable Faversham a boorish injustice, but if he revived Royle's piffish "The Squaw Man" for any other reason than to display himself in soothing juxtaposition to the smart and lovely Mrs. Lydig

Hoyt I shall be glad publicly to apologize to him and to pay him libel damages in the sum of two suggestions as to plays he might have much more profitably produced. Further, in the matter of managerial aspiration, consider the late effort of the group of actors who styled themselves the National Repertory Company. It was the intention of these actors, expressed by their spokesman in a speech at the premiere, to prove to the world for once and all that Erlanger, Shubert and Hopkins were so many mere office-boys, and no more necessary to the theatre, the actor and the drama than the girls who sell chocolates in the rear aisles. The sentiment was greeted with astounding enthusiasm; the actor bowed his way to the backdrop full of beaming confidence in the future; and so loud was the neighing of Cain's storehouse-wagon horses on Saturday night that the audience in Erlanger's New Amsterdam Theatre across the street thought for a moment that Marilyn Miller's role in "Sally" had been taken by Blossom Seeley.

These are only a few of the examples of actor vanity recently exposed in the Broadway theatres. In themselves they are trivial, and perhaps not worth chronicling; but there is at bottom, for all their triviality, something significant in them. Thus far this season—and up to the time I write—eighty-seven new dramatic productions have been made in New York. Of these, no less than twenty-six of the most worthless owed their production, if my confidential agents may be relied upon, directly to the vanity of actors in one form or another. Of these, further, seven more worthy were, by common consent of the professional reviewers and the public, perverted and ruined by the vanity of actors in one form or another. Of these, still further, nine of varying degree of merit were made to suffer a financial loss to their producers by actors' peccadillos generated by vanity of one form or another. And of these, further still, exactly sixteen of the most disastrous from an artistic

and commercial point of view would never have been produced had it not been for actors' vanity of this or that sort. Thus, it is perhaps no exaggeration to say that much of the trash that clutters up the native stage is born, and born chiefly, out of the vainglory of the genus mime. One of the leading performers of our stage who recently produced an unspeakable sample of pretentious fustian rejected in its favor a play by Hermann Bahr on the ground that she did not deem it quite nice for her to play the role of a woman suspected of infidelity. Another of our leading actors who is about to appear in a piece by a fifth-rate Broadway hack has, my agents report to me, just declined to play in one of the masterpieces of Porto-Riche on the score of its moral quality. A third leading actor, presently appearing in one of the conventional Rialto piffles, refused, I am informed, to take the central role in an adaptation of one of the truly fine plays of our generation on the ground that it was written by a German and would so hurt his standing in his club. And there is a fourth report to the effect that the production of an excellent drama by one of the best of our native playwrights has been unavoidably held up because of the manager's inability to persuade the most talented of the male stars under his direction to take the role of the central character, a passé man whom the heroine rejects in favor of a younger suitor. The list might doubtless be greatly amplified by dramatists and producers. I have set down only a few of the instances that have lately come to my ears.

II

MR. FRITZ LEIBER's exhibitions last month at the Lexington and Forty-Eighth Street theatres again revealed him to be the best general interpreter of Shakespeare on the American stage. Though John Barrymore's admirable Richard and Faversham's no less admirable Iago are not out of memory,

Leiber's consistently fine work in a comprehensive repertoire gives him the leadership of our classic stage. Beside him, Mantell takes on the aspect of a bull attempting to play the zither, Hampden of a college professor dancing to a gipsy tune, and Sothorn of a distinguished New England grandpa dressed up as Romeo at a fancy ball. Hackett, of course, is nowhere: Shakespeare is far beyond his capacity. In Leiber there is all the born sense of poetry and drama and wild, passionate beauty that these others lack. Without the force of presence possessed by certain of the others, he is able, out of his voice and features, out of his emotional equipment and body swing, to send the blood of grandeur shooting afresh through the text of the great poet. They say he is intelligent, and hence the fine actor that he is. Bosh. He is merely obedient. He has the sound sense to read the simple and rarely wonderful line not like an actor who would be a savant but like an actor who would be merely an actor. Hence his great eloquence. Leiber knows more about *acting* Shakespeare than all the other American actors who concern themselves chiefly with *understanding* him. He is, first and foremost, an actor. To his colleagues he is content to leave all the extrinsic nonsenses—all the psycho-analyzings of character, all the "theories" of interpretation, and all the diagnoses of intent—of which they are so grotesquely fond.

III

OF the comedies produced in the last month or so, the best is A. A. Milne's "The Dover Road," a slight but droll essay in British humor which enjoys the further advantage of infusing very deftly an eminently moral and sentimental point of view with an agreeable air of bland unconcern and mockery. It is the best job that the hitherto luke-warm Milne has negotiated. Like all of his theatrical writing, true enough, it periodically gets beads of perspiration in trying to catch a com-

bination of the Barrie-Max Beerbohm sort of thing; but this piece happens to be a trifle more free from the strain, and hence proportionately more amusing, than its antecedents. The fable of a wealthy bachelor who lives on the road to Dover, to Calais, to the Riviera and illegal love, and who ironically devotes his life to straightening out the affairs of vamoosing couples, the play, while generally fragile and sometimes laggard in the matter of imagination, constitutes good theatre material. And its value is considerably heightened by excellent staging on the part of Mr. Guthrie McClintic (which may or may not be, so to speak, a pseudonym for Winthrop Ames on this occasion), and by two adroit comic performances on the part of the Messrs. Charles Cherry and Reginald Mason. The two women performers, the Misses Lenihan and Pearson, either through bad direction or natural incompetence, contribute performances out of key with the Milne scherzo. The former bites her way through the text. The latter licks her share of it as if it were so much molasses.

Another comedy of fitful quality is Charles Vildrac's "Le Paquebot Ténacité," translated with an ear stuffed with cotton and thus deleted of most of its verbal graces and all of its atmosphere. The play, here known as "The Steamship Tenacity," reaches for something that it never quite achieves, yet the reach in itself it not without its interest. Originally produced in Paris two years ago by Jacques Copeau, that amiable discoverer of dubious geniuses, it presents, impressionistically speaking, a Joseph Conrad theme worked out in terms of some Manchester Alfred Capus: a tale of two human corks tossed about upon the sea of love and life and sardonically blown in unintentioned directions, this one—a sentimentalist—toward grim reality, and that one—a grim realist—toward derisory sentimentality. To gain a fair idea of the play, it is necessary to go to the original text, since the local revelation was as sour

a case of murder as the stage has vouchsafed us since the late Charles Frohman, in one of his moments of sportiveness, staged Bataille's "La Vierge Folle" with a middle-aged stock company actress who looked like Ellen Key in the role of the foolish virgin. This original text is found to contain several very well handled dramatic passages, and several amusing flashes of character drawing. To attempt to get an idea of the ironic little play through the local Americanization of the dialogue and the lugubrious recitation thereof by a troupe of actors who apparently imagine that they are playing in something by Massenet, is out of the question.

IV

THE enthusiastic criticisms of Peretz Hirshbein's "The Idle Inn," composed by the local hazlitts when the play was produced in its original tongue in the Jewish Art Theatre, were plainly due to the deception that a foreign tongue in drama always works upon uncomprehending ears. A play always seems much better than it actually is in a language that one doesn't understand. I am certain, for example, that my own original enthusiasm for the exhibits in the Moscow Art Theatre was due in considerable measure to the fact that I know only seven words in Russian, five of which haplessly have to do with liquor. There is a peculiar sense of importance to a language with which one is not familiar. If some prankful manager were tomorrow night to produce a play by Samuel Shipman down on the Bowery in Polish, it is morally certain that the next morning's newspapers would excitedly hail it as a great masterpiece. "The Idle Inn," allowing for what I am informed by presumably sound judges is a crude translation, is—like much of the Yiddish drama—a hybrid of Russian peasant drama crossed with a Celtic strain. It has a certain agreeable exotic overtone, but its body is imaginatively lethargic and, where not lethargic,

often transparently imitative. It impresses one, with a few exceptions, merely as bad Dunsany played on a badly lighted stage. Arthur Hopkins staged the second act of the Hirshbein play dexterously, but the evening was a heavy one, the heaviness being augmented by an obvious moving picture performance of the leading role by Ben-Ami, the Yiddish Otis Skinner.

V

"THE WHITE PEACOCK," manufactured by the regal Petrova, grand duchess of the cinema, for her own use, is a casserole Español wherein the excessively passionate Doña Villar y Villar Perfecto, her lover, the noble and handsome Hoyo de Monterey Panatella, and her jealous and despicable spouse, Flor de Habana Breva, engage in the usual alarms and excursions, the while the members of the United Order of Stage Mechanics turn the purple moonlight on and off. Madame Petrova is a striking stage figure and a woman of no few satiric and humorous gifts, as those who have read her short stories know; but these she has abandoned in her present capacity as actress-author for the species of impassioned theatrical hocus-pocus over which her other self must have considerable difficulty restraining its low chuckles.

On the other hand, I have no doubt, in view of his past performances, that Mr. Cosmo Hamilton regards his "Danger," briefly referred to last month, as a very fine specimen of dramatic art. This Mr. Hamilton has never been one to be backward in heatedly tearing open the collar of his shirt, adjusting his spats, and rushing forth to point out the great virtues of his *opera* that have either eluded, or nonplussed, the sapient noses of his critics. Indeed, on the present occasion he was in the breach, stripped to the buff, perspiring like a cocktail-shaker, and yelling out caveats, even before his critics had a chance to open their mouths. It appears that Mr. Hamilton fears that his critics, unlike himself,

are not aware of the important part that sex plays in life and hence not prone, like himself, to consider his dramatic documents on the question the significant contributions to human knowledge and sociological philosophy that they are. Thus, in his latest masterpiece, we find Mr. Hamilton profoundly disturbed over the increasing number of Lesbians in London, with sub-motif trepidations over what is consequently going to be the problem of getting enough babies to fill Parliament. Those of you who are acquainted with Mr. Hamilton's extraordinarily superb novels, their Thackerayan form, their Zolaesque force and their rare Conradian style, veritable epics of fashionable grousing, need not be informed of his analogous great artistry as a dramatist. Italy may have its D'Annunzio, Spain its Benavente, France its Rostand, Germany its Hauptmann and England its Shaw, but New Rochelle, too, has its Hamilton. "Danger" is one of his true gems. Porto-Riche himself has never done anything like it. And, as I have observed elsewhere, I heartily recommend it to all Elks, servant-girls, curb-brokers, shoe-drummers and gentlemen's gentlemen.

VI

"CAPTAIN APPLEJACK," by Walter Hackett, is a diverting comic version of the "Road to Yesterday" type of play. Its second act contains several amusing burlesque moments, well handled by Wallace Eddinger, Hamilton Revelle and Miss Mary Nash. "Drifting," by John Colton and D. H. Andrews, is a Chinese melodrama of the old thirty-cent brand, in which Miss Helen Menken takes perilous flight through the hills of Tung Kow on the Tartar border modishly got up in a dress designed by Henri Bendel. She is assisted in her escape from the blood-hungry Jhanzi warriors by Mr. Robert Warwick, neatly togged out by Abercrombie and Fitch. "Bull-Dog Drummond," by the English writer who signs himself Sapper, is a thesaurus of melo-

dramatic hokum written, one suspects, with tongue in cheek. It is a *reductio ad absurdum* of the detective play and, approached in the proper spirit, is almost as amusing as "The Sheik," the illustrations in *The Little Review*, or Tumulty's biography of Woodrow Wilson.

VII

"HE WHO GETS SLAPPED," the last play written by Andreyev, is marred by a vagueness that has been characteristically hailed by all the Maeterlinckophiles as "a delightfully elusive quality." The elusiveness seems to me to be less delightful than irritating. It is due not to sound, well-considered, deliberate and exploratory fancy, as is the comparative elusiveness, say, of such a work as Hauptmann's "The Sunken Bell" or "And Pippa Dances," but to lack of clear grasp of the subject in hand and clear perception as to its execution. That this is a justifiable assumption is borne in upon anyone who has read of the physical and spiritual condition in which the dramatist found himself at the time the play was written and, further, upon anyone who appreciates the effect on the dramatist of certain confounding personal events that directly preceded his attempt to forget himself in the preparation of this particular composition.

Andreyev, in all his work save this, was never vague, never evasive. But here we find him, for this and that reason, unable quite to negotiate the task he had outlined, with the result that his play gropes with more or less futility for secure ground and, failing to achieve it, tumbles between the two stools of literal drama and symbolism. In his antecedent plays—take the short "Savva" by way of admirable example—his agility in straddling the two stools was unquestioned: the result was as explicit and unelusive as a Broadway crook play. But there is none of this quality in "He Who Gets Slapped," and we have not a little wry confusion. I do not mean to say, of course, that one can't see precisely what the drama-

tist is striving for. Despite the apparent befuddlement of the local reviewers, the fundamental idea and the notion of execution are clearly and readily discernible. What I mean is that this fundamental idea evades not the audience, but Andreyev. The artist's aim is clear; it was his resource on this occasion that proved deficient. . . . Sound art is never recondite. Molière and Shakespeare are as transpicuous as Maeterlinck and Georg Kaiser are ambiguous. That a great work of art is susceptible of many meanings, many interpretations, seems to me to be largely nonsense. What, tell me, are the *many* meanings, and *many* interpretations, of "Romeo and Juliet," Beethoven's Fifth, Raphael's "Spasmodic," or the "Divina Commedia" of Dante?

"He Who Gets Slapped" is familiar enough in plan. It follows the oft-repeated dramatic scheme of playing a tragic tale against a grotesquely comic, or at least wholly irrelevant, background. In the last twelve years the European popular theatre has given us no less than half a dozen playwrights who have exhibited the device—Sil Vara and Molnar, to name but two. Andreyev takes as his central figure a nameless character (there is here more than a hint of autobiography) whose life has been disfigured by his wife's infidelity, and throws him into the midst of a circus troupe. The man had been a buffeted clown in the sawdust ring of the world; he will now be a buffeted clown in the mimic world. But once Andreyev postures his initial idea it becomes tinselled out of all proportion. His grasp upon the central character and the tributary streams of incident and character that shape that character's end becomes weaker and weaker as the drama progresses. Soon

an imaginative chaos stalks the pages of the manuscript and the straight avenue of character, drama and philosophy becomes intersected with shady cross-streets and dark alleyways. There are periodic passages of sharp color; there are occasional flashes of potential brilliance; but each time an imaginative untidiness invades the promise and attack and puts them to rout.

The direction of the play by Mr. Robert Milton, who has staged the manuscript for the Theatre Guild, seems to me to further this intrinsic confusion: he fails to bring to the production the theatrical sagacity that might have relieved the evening of its present jig-saw properties. Mr. Simonson, the designer of the scenery, the actors and the director each appear to have had a different idea of the play, and the director has failed in the capacity of synthesist. Mr. Richard Bennett, in the leading role, thus plays the first act in the key of "The Passing of the Third Floor Back," the second in a key that is a cross between Henry Arthur Jones' "Michael and His Lost Angel" and Barrie's "Pantaloone," and the third in the key of Richard Mansfield and "A Parisian Romance." Miss Margalo Gillmore makes a lovely picture as the circus girl and plays the final act appealingly, but has evidently been directed to play the preceding acts in the vein of Little Eva. Miss Helen Westley and Mr. Frank Reicher have apparently directed themselves, with the result that the former plays the role of the amorous lion tamer in the spirit of the notorious Mrs. Ebb Smith and the latter that of the quasi-*gigolo* as if it were a role in "The Greenwich Village Follies." Thus, also, while Mr. Simonson's scenic outfitting is very attractive, one feels that either it is out of the picture or that everything else is.



Taking Stock

By H. L. Mencken

I

The National Letters Today

DESPITE a good deal of moaning and gnashing of teeth by pessimists, of whom, when the wind is in the East, I have the honor to be one, it must be obvious that the practical chances of a new author in the United States today are a good deal better than they were ten or fifteen years ago, or even six or eight years ago, and that they are steadily improving. There was a time, well remembered by all of us, when the reception that greeted him, if he tried to say anything genuinely new or anything old in a new way, was indistinguishable from the reception that would greet a Prohibition enforcement officer at an Elks' convention. The reviewing of books, in those days, was almost wholly in the hands of seedy college tutors and of such nonsensical tit-willows as the late Hamilton Wright Mabie. Sweetness and light: these were the things they looked for in the new books. Finding them, they dazzled their customers with news of a new Julia Magruder or Henry Van Dyke. Failing to find them, they either blasted the contumacious violator of the canon with a Presbyterian anathema, or cloaked him in silence and laid him away to die. Now and then, true enough, a Frank Norris or a Stephen Crane broke through their guard and found a public in spite of them, but in the main they were influential as well as imbecile (a combination certainly not rare in human history), and their judgments were docilely followed by

the women's clubs, the high-school teachers of English, and the rank and file of the booboisie. Think how long they kept Walt Whitman in cold storage, how slow they were to comprehend the stature of Mark Twain, how effectively they plastered George Ade with a label which yet conceals his actual worth! Try to figure out how many Sandburgs, Sherwood Andersons and Willa Cathers they must have scared into silence in the days of their reign, or, worse, into cheapness and shoddiness! Go back over the history of their idiotic dealings with Cabell!

It seems to me that things are different today, and that the beginning author has gained enormously. A number of the old-time moral reviewers, of course, still flourish, and in a few critical journals, notably the *Literary Supplement* of the *New York Times*, their blowsy nonsense is still on tap. But it would be plainly inaccurate to say that they are still influential. On the contrary, they are laughed at by all persons above the intellectual level of Potash and Perlmutter, and they can neither make a new book by their praise nor destroy it by their denunciation. The case of John Dos Passos' "Three Soldiers" is brilliantly in point. Ten years ago Dos Passos would have worn out the paving-stones of New York hunting a publisher for it; five years ago (even disregarding the patriotic blather raised by the war) it would have been slated violently by three reviewers out of four. Only a small minority of professional heretics, indeed, would have discussed it sympathetically and understandingly. But in 1920 it got a

press, as the English say, that was almost unanimously friendly—a press so friendly, in fact, that most of the plain defects of the book were overlooked. What happened when Coningsby Dawson, the English marshmallow, attacked it in the *Times*? What happened was that Dawson himself became ridiculous. If there were any other attacks of the same sort they made so little noise that even I, who may be called a specialist in such buffooneries, never heard of them. All the young critics who have been hatched since 1914 were hotly in favor of the work, and as hotly in favor of Dos Passos himself. It was the very excess of his heresy, in truth, that got him most of that support. The old yearning for sweetness and light was completely dead; in place of it there was an appetite, often more fierce than discriminating, for blood and iron. It would be difficult to imagine a more radical change in a few years.

Its causes will engage the literary historians of tomorrow, and no doubt they will make the matter sufficiently complex and unintelligible. As for me, I believe that those causes were really quite simple. What ailed the old school of critics was merely that they lacked sense. Many of them were learned men, and most of them, I am convinced, were quite honest, but they were without intellectual resiliency and ingenuity: they could not *argue* convincingly. This made them easy prey in the long run for the literary anarchists and agnostics who hung upon their flanks, even in the high day of their power. Bit by bit the weakness of their position was made manifest; step by step they were forced to take the defensive. The younger generation, growing up in sight of the battle, presently found itself cheering for the anarchists—and from that moment the doom of the old guard was unescapable. What remains of it is a small squad of sorely wounded survivors—chiefly tear-squeezers of the Dawson model or doddering pedagogues. It has so little influence that even publishers,

who are the last men to find out what is going on in letters, no longer fear it. They print books every day that violate every one of its canons, and that it would have scared them out of printing so recently as half a dozen years ago. There thus remains no impediment whatsoever to the free functioning of the adolescent American literatus. So long as he bears in mind a few rules laid down by the Comstocks (most of them easily evaded by a little cleverness) he may set forth any idea, however startling, that happens to bubble up from his soul's prison in the liver, and in any imaginable terms. Let a new Sandburg come trudging in from the prairie, and a reception committee is awaiting him. Let a new Fitzgerald escape from Princeton, and he is received in New York with a cordiality (both spiritual and spirituous) that the president of his university might envy. There is even a tendency to speculate in futures—to hymn the neophyte, not for what he has actually done, but for what he seems likely to do tomorrow. I point to the cases of young Benét, young Weaver and the other bright youths of the Embryonic School, now so much heard of. Very few of them have accomplished anything that shows solid worth, but they seem to be trying hard, and so a very eager gallery eggs them on. If they blow up tomorrow and sink into obscurity it will certainly not be for lack of a hospitable hearing.

II

Product and Promise

So far, so good. The whole scene lies bathed in sunlight. There is a sound of harps and psalteries in the air. Committees covered with badges and bearing welcoming banners lie in wait for jejune geniuses at every railroad station. A new Walt Whitman, imagining him suddenly precipitated from the interstellar ether today, would get a reception almost fit for a bootlegger. A new Poe would be deluged with adulation, and even with money. A new Emerson would get nearly as

much attention from the newspapers as Charles M. Schwab or Mary Garden. But what of the literature that comes out of the actual arrivists—what of the practical effects and usufructs of all this unaccustomed hospitality? Here, alas, there must be a sudden descent from *sforzando* to *pizzicato*. The new literature is full of promise, and in more than one direction it has begun to show fulfilment, but it still lacks a secure body of first-rate work—it has yet to justify itself in the grand manner. What ails it, of course, is chiefly its very newness. There has not yet been time enough for all the possibilities that are offered to be worked out; the new authors have not yet got their growth. Worse, a good many of them seem to be unable to grasp the fact that they are now actually free—that the old artificial impediments to the merchanting of their ideas have all broken down. This incapacity, one observes, chiefly afflicts those who began in unhappier times, chiefly such men as Dreiser and Cabell. Whenever Dreiser emerges from his Los Angeles fog long enough to discuss the national letters, he always talks as if he were still surrounded by the Y. M. C. A. gunmen who tried to dispose of him in the year 1900. This is not true. If he were coming into New York today with "Sister Carrie" under his arm, he would surely need no Frank Norris to sell it for him, and not even Doubleday, Page & Co. (now actually printing Walt Whitman, that dirty fellow!) would think of suppressing it after putting it into type. Even the case of "The 'Genius'" belongs to history. It hangs on in the courts simply because the fortunes of the book happened to be intermingled with those of a disintegrating publishing house. Dreiser's present publisher, assaulted by the Comstocks in the same way, would resist them and beat them.

Cabell, another apparent victim of what remains of Comstockery, is too discerning a fellow to take it seriously. He must know very well that it was precisely the attack of the smut-snouters that delivered him from his long so-

journal in Coventry. For years a small minority of reviewers had mauled the tom-tom in his interest, but he remained unacknowledged by the mandarins. Then came the suppression of "Jurgen," the whole country began to read him—and overnight he was promoted from the tattered gray uniform and rusty musket of a Virginia genealogist to the baton, gild braid and *Ordre pour le mérite* of an Ornament of the National Literature. Today only a few despairing schoolmarms remain against him. "Jurgen" itself has been more widely read than any great masterpiece since "Dere Mable." Just as the suppressed American edition, by excessive reading, began to wear out, the same publisher who allowed the Comstocks to suppress Dreiser's "The 'Genius'" began flooding the country with a sumptuous English edition. It was this English edition, I believe, that saved American imports for 1921 from falling to nothing. There is now a copy in every American institution of learning, including probably the Ohio Wesleyan University and the Mormon Sorbonne at Salt Lake City, and the youth of the land, searching it in vain for the obscenities visible only to the trained Methodist eye, have got inoculated with the news that it is a very fine piece of writing, and that the author is a vastly more competent fictioneer than the composers of the glad books.

But Cabell, though he estimates the Comstocks correctly, is yet a trifle wobbled by an influence quite as trivial, to wit, that of the English reviewers. This used to be very powerful in America and it still is among a small sect of Anglomaniacs, but it is in very rapid decay, and will not concern us long. The plain truth is that ordinary reviewing, for half a dozen years past, has been a great deal better done in America than in England. Log-rolling, over there, has gone so far that unless one knows the precise relations between reviewed and reviewer it is almost impossible to read a review to any profit. Those writers who belong to the reviewer's gang are all masters com-

parable to Hardy and Conrad; those who are outside are all beneath contempt. The result is frequently visible, first, in the vociferous crying-up of such mediocrities as Saphier, Merrick and Swinnerton, and secondly, in the complete overlooking of such men as McFee and Grant Watson, both of whom had to come to the United States for appreciation. Worse, even those English critics who stand above log-rolling—at least of the crass and preposterous sort that is practised by the majority—are singularly incompetent. Consider, for example, Middleton Murry and Clutter-Brock. Murry is a learned man, and writes with considerable grace and charm, but he seems to be quite anæsthetic to the literature that is in being: all his interest is concentrated upon the past. He knows a good deal more than our own Paul Elmer More, but intrinsically the two have the same outlook, and are equally futile and sterile. Clutter-Brock is simply a third-rate Murry—a hollow hack imitating the bow-wow manner of an Oxford don. His recent book is filled with some of the feeblest nonsense that has come out of England in twenty years. It is almost as hollow as the two critical works of J. C. Squire. In America, even Stuart P. Sherman is more intelligent.

The English master-minds, ever alert for a chance to wallop the abhorrent Yankee, lately took a hack at Cabell, and apparently annoyed him. But it must be patent that their attack did him no serious damage even in England; on the contrary it seems to have benefited him, for it was followed by the publication of the English "Jurgen" aforesaid. I see no reason why any other American writer should take their denunciations seriously. As I argued in this place some time ago, they are quite unable to understand whatever is most national and distinctive in American letters, and must inevitably regard it as unpleasant. This explains their hostility to such writers as Sherwood Anderson, and their inability to comprehend such works as Aikman's

"Zell." But a hostility that is thus founded upon ignorance and worse is not dangerous. The enmity of the old-time critics of the Mabie school had a good deal firmer ground under it; they at least understood the thing they were opposing. Nevertheless, their long battle brought them to complete disaster in the end. Today it is not the wrath of the lingering survivors of the old order that is dangerous, but their favor. Let them praise a new book, and at once the majority of intelligent readers will conclude that it is a sugar-teat, and hence not worth reading. The English dons and log-rollers are headed for the same failure. If they have any influence today, it is only among those extreme varieties of colonials who coo with delight every time an Englishman kicks them in the pantaloons. Despite the hearty effort of the Anglo-Saxon brotherhoods, Christian and Jewish, which strive to bring the two great English-speaking nations into a better accord, and even into cultural and political identity, it is obvious to any fair observer that they are actually drifting apart, and that the armed conflict which looms ahead is foreshadowed by a breaking down of the old American dependence on and naïve respect for English notions. The literature that is in the making in the United States already shows far more Continental influence than English influence. Such a book as "Jurgen," or "Winesburg, Ohio," or "Chicago Poems," or even "My Antonia" is palpably incomprehensible to the normal Englishman.

III

Influences at Home

IN brief, the American author with anything interesting to say need no longer fear the opposition of critical stupidity and intransigence; if anything, current criticism tends to pull him ahead too fast and to get him out of his depth. This has happened, I suspect, in the case of Anderson. He is constantly nosing into regions that are still dark to him. A good many of

the poets go the same route. What really menaces the new literature is the seduction of the cheap magazine. It holds out rewards that are sometimes too huge to be resisted, and encourages tricks and dodges that are very easy to learn. The results are visible in the annual volumes of short-story "masterpieces" selected by Mr. O'Brien, whose standards of judgment are apparently exactly those of the editor, say, of the *Red Book* or the *Saturday Evening Post*. The committee which awards the annual O. Henry prize for the worst fiction of the year seems to employ criteria that are even more astonishing: the stories that it selects are almost always hollow and artificial. It is true, of course, that an author of absolutely first-rate talent could not be imagined manufacturing such garbage, even for the great rewards that it brings. One simply could not think of a Conrad doing it, or a Hauptmann, or a Turgenev, or a Hardy. But in the present case there is no question of absolutely first-rate talents: we are dealing with men and women who fall, at best, into the second class. Not a few of them, at the top of that second class, have shown that the temptation is strong enough to move them. I avoid the indecency of pointing to Dreiser and Hergesheimer as examples, and direct your attention to George Ade and Harry Leon Wilson. And, to leave the novel for the play, to Booth Tarkington and Zoë Akins. Here are four authors who have not only exhibited very high promise; they have also given us very high achievement. And yet all four of them have followed that achievement by succumbing to the blandishments of the cheese-mongers of the theatres and the magazines. All four have done work that is deliberately second-rate.

I believe that the influence of such temptations is a great deal underestimated. It is easy enough to argue that every author of genuine talents should cultivate an artistic conscience, and to denounce him when he throttles it. But such theorizing is one thing,

and getting a living is quite another thing. The best literature, unfortunately, is not usually very profitable. Now and then, true enough, a "Huckleberry Finn" or an "Old Wives' Tale" earns a large amount of money, but that is surely not often. In the main, what is genuinely good appeals only to a very small class, and thus brings in very little money. I doubt that all of the plays of Eugene O'Neill taken together have earned as much as one trashy farce by Avery Hopwood—a man who could do good work if he wanted to, but who prefers frankly to shake down the boobery. "Sister Carrie," to most laymen, would seem to be a successful novel, and practically every civilized American has read it. But the total number of civilized human beings in America is so small that the sales of "Sister Carrie" in twenty years probably do not measure half the sales of even the least successful boob-bumper of Gene Stratton Porter or Harold Bell Wright. The American author without independent means, facing this situation, turns either to the popular magazines or to the movies. In both directions he is forced to put on the motley. The magazines demand the "powerful" balderdash admired by Mr. O'Brien, and the movies have use only for what is frankly idiotic. I am not railing foolishly against the magazine editors or the movie magnates. Both must produce literary merchandise meeting the tastes of millions who, save politically and theologically, are virtually indistinguishable from chimpanzees. They order what they can sell. But manufacturing it is certainly no healthful exercise for artists.

Nevertheless, the state of affairs might be very much worse. In the face of a temptation that appears to be almost irresistible, there are still writers who resist it, and if not every day, then gallantly now and then. Cabell, in this department, may be said to be almost virginal: I have never heard of him changing a word to accommodate an editor. Nor of Miss Cather. Nor of Anderson, or Charles G. Norris, or

Henry B. Fuller. Nor of the new-comer, Ben Hecht, a man of such brilliantly facile talents that he might have very easily made a lot of money writing for the train-boy magazines. Better still, there is constant evidence that some of the authors who have long served those magazines have been seized of late by a yearning to escape—and proof not infrequently that they are quite capable of it. The case of Sinclair Lewis comes instantly to mind. Lewis is an artisan of the deftest skill, and for years he was a star of the magazines, and apparently unfit for anything better than the sort of stuff blue-ribboned by Mr. O'Brien. What caused him to become fretful I do not know: possibly a reading of "Lord Jim," or the whisper of some friendly angel, or a sneer that got under his hide, or the direct inspiration of God. Whatever the cause—personally, I suspect that it was contact with Cabell—he one day put all his old tricks behind him, gathered images of some genuine human beings into the eye of his mind, and forthwith wrote "Main Street"—a work certainly far from perfect, but equally certainly full of extremely sound stuff, and colored here and there with stuff that is absolutely first-rate. Ironically enough, the book made a great popular success, and earned more money than any of the trade-goods of the author's earlier manufacture. I doubt that this success will ever be repeated by a work of the same sort, but there is always, of course, the possibility that it may be—and that will suffice to hearten more Lewises. It will constitute, at worst, a temptation to counteract the other temptation.

Miss Zona Gale and Miss Edna Ferber have risked the same hazard of late, both successfully, and Owen Johnson has risked it and failed. The case of Johnson is instructive. He has abundant technical equipment for sound work, as his earliest stories proved, but he seems to be handicapped by a cargo of childish ideas, evidently carried over from the days of the war. "The Wasted Generation" begins as if

it were the work of a sincere artist; it ends as the work of a member of the Vigilantes. Turn from it to Dos Passos' "Three Soldiers," and instantly one senses the unreality of its pictures of the war—its dependence upon Creel Press Bureau banalities rather than upon first-hand observation. But Johnson is by no means done for. Like Gouverneur Morris, another capital technician, he is plainly moving toward clearer air levels. In many other directions I notice the same reaching out for a sounder, more solid manner. The most encouraging sign of the times, indeed, is not that so many neophytes of good skill are bobbing up on all sides, but that so many writers of longer experience are plainly taking stock of themselves, and planning new work that transcends the needs of the magazines. I formally call upon Louis Joseph Vance to hit the sawdust trail. So long ago as 1913 he made an attempt with "Joan Thursday," but it was too soon. Today his chances would be infinitely better. I name no more names. But even in the Authors' League there are novelists who might do respectable work if they would.

IV

The Poets

As I have more than once said in this place, it seems to me that the New Poetry movement in the Republic is beginning to show a high blood pressure and hepatic insufficiency. The poets were the shock troops in the revolt against pedagogy and obscurantism, and they gave very valuable service, but of late they appear to be withering; the novelists and dramatists have outdistanced them. Some of the most valiant of them, indeed, turn out to have been no poets at all, but rather critics and propagandists. I name three examples, widely differing in every way: Miss Amy Lowell, Louis Untermeyer and Vachel Lindsay. Miss Lowell's verse, studied calmly, is found to be chiefly very mediocre stuff, indeed; one small song by Muna Lee, or Sara Teasdale,

or Amanda Hall, or Lady Speyer, or John McClure, or anyone of a dozen others that might be nominated is worth the whole body of it. But she unquestionably did the state some service by her bellicose assaults upon the old order, and by her effective merchenting of ideas borrowed from Ezra Pound and his French friends. She was, in her day, a stupendously devastating propagandist, and if she loses force to-day it is simply because her case has been won. Untermeyer was scarcely less useful, though in a different way. His extremely acute and agile intelligence made his best poems seem rather like amazing conservatory exercises than like the dithyrambs they pretended to be, but that very intelligence was more valuable to the movement than any of its actual verse. Most of the genuine poets—notably Sandburg, Frost and Oppenheim—were poor expositors. They could write good poetry, but they could not explain it to a public accustomed to bad poetry. Here Untermeyer came to the bat, discreet, skillful, invincible. He is, I believe, outgrowing poetry, and even the interest in poetry. He will be heard of hereafter in prose. Lindsay was a successful propagandist, too—not as a press agent or critic is a propagandist, but after the fashion of the elephant in a circus parade. He served poetry as Dr. Billy Sunday used to serve evangelical theology—by making it picturesque. His actual poems, I am convinced, are chiefly nonsense. To compare him to Walt Whitman, as is frequently done, is sheer lunacy. It would be far more sensible to compare him to Walt Mason.

I find nothing of any merit in the current poetry magazines, of which there are now at least a dozen. Second-raters simply posture in the discarded costumes of the pioneers. In place of poetical ideas one encounters all sorts of sociological, epistemological and psychological ideas. Conrad Aiken tries to reduce Sigmund Freud to doggerel; Miss Lowell and her imitators perform clumsy tricks in a "polyphonic prose" that is actually in-

distinguishable from the style of a Chesterfield cigarette advertisement. The real poetry of the day is being written by poets who waste no time on such ungainly strivings and stretchings. As always, it is lyrical. No other sort of real poetry is known.

V

Book Notices

- THE THEATRE OF TOMORROW, by Kenneth Macgowan (*Boni-Liveright*). A comprehensive account of the new stagecraft, with superb illustrations in color.
- THE BOOK OF MASKS, by Remy de Gourmont (*Luce*). The celebrated French essayist's opinions of his contemporaries: Maeterlinck, Verhaeren, Moréas, André, Gide, Pierre Louys, Arthur Rimbaud, etc. Now and then the stuff begins to date, but in the main it is fresh enough.
- HISTORY OF ART, by Elie Faure, translated by Walter Pach (*Harper*). Vol. I: Ancient Art. A lyrical treatise, full of impassioned enthusiasm, but often defective in information. Very well illustrated.
- CHIVALRY, by James Branch Cabell (*McBride*). A new edition of one of Cabell's earliest and most charming books, here discreetly rewritten, and with a sound introduction by Burton Rascoe.
- THE BOOK OF LIFE, by Upton Sinclair (*Economy Book Co.*). Mr. Sinclair sets forth all he knows. Some of it, alas, is not true. But it is an entertaining and often instructive book.
- THE SPIRIT OF THE COMMON LAW, by Roscoe Pound (*Jones*). A penetrating discussion of the legal theories which lie at the bottom of American law. It is beyond the grasp of most American lawyers, but better-informed readers will find it excellent stuff.
- WHAT'S WHAT IN THE LABOR MOVEMENT, by Waldo H. Browne (*Huebsch*). An encyclopediac dictionary of terms used in the labor movement. On all controversial questions the author is in favor of the union.
- MODERN ITALIAN SURGERY, by Paolo de Vecchi (*Hoebner*). An elaborate account of surgical progress in Italy, before, during and since the war.
- INDISPENSABLE INFORMATION FOR INFANTS, by Owen Wister (*Macmillan*). Mr. Wister strains very hard for snickers. He is far more charmingly clownish when he is serious.
- FAIRY TALES AND STORIES, by Hans Christian Andersen (*Macmillan*). For the first time Andersen is decently translated. He wrote for children; his previous translators tried to make him fit reading for chautauqua orators and university presidents. Now Miss Signe Toksvig remedies that vandalism. A useful preface by Francis Hackett, and delightful illustrations by Eric Pape.

THE NATION

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S.S.—Mar. 22

CHARLES FRANCIS PRESS, NEW YORK

A Discovery that Suddenly Made My Skin Beautiful

PERHAPS it was the glow of the lampshaded candle on our table. Perhaps it was the quaintness of our surroundings in the little restaurant. Will became suddenly eloquent.

"How exquisite you look with the candlelight playing on your face!" he whispered. "Do you know," he added earnestly, "you remind me of a rare old cameo—so delicate and pearly that you seem almost transparent."

I smiled—and dropped my eyes so that Will could not see, in their brightness, how exultant I was, how elated.

But how could he know that only three months ago I despaired of ever having a good complexion. How could he know that every treatment I had tried, failed.

Three Types of Skin—The Secret

Then one day I made an amazing discovery, and the result is that today my complexion is all—yes, all—that Will said it was.

Here's how it happened. I was reading a magazine, and I noticed an announcement by a famous specialist that there are three distinct types of skin—oily, dry and normal; and that the preparations that benefit a Dry Skin are absolutely harmful to an Oily Skin.

But where was I to go to find anyone who could tell me just what to use? The problem was solved for me quite unexpectedly. I was passing the toilet counter in one of the large department stores, and I heard a woman talking about the care of the different types of skin. She was offering certain Combination Preparations made especially for each type. Just what I was looking for!

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Send no money. Simply mail the coupon and the outfit will be shipped. When it arrives, just pay the postman \$2.00. If you are not satisfied after five days' use, just write and your money will be instantly refunded. But mail the coupon at once, as this special offer may be withdrawn at any moment. The Luxtone Co., Dept. 133, 2703 Cottage Grove Ave., Chicago, Ill.

THE LUXTONE COMPANY.

Dept. 133, 2703 Cottage Grove Ave., Chicago, Ill.

Send me your special Luxtone Beauty Combination consisting of a special soap, a day cream, a night cream, and a jar of the powder-and-cream Beauty Secret. I will pay the postman \$2.00 on arrival. (Please check your type of skin.)

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